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1998

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The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

# Jordan Times

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## Regent visits base

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Monday paid an inspection tour to Muwaffaq Saiti Air-base. He toured the base and checked the squadron of F16s which were put into service by the Jordanian Armed Forces recently. Prince Hassan conveyed His Majesty King Hussein's greetings to the base officers. The Crown Prince watched a military drill at the base and voiced his satisfaction for the advanced performance of the base staff.

## Albright arrives today

AMMAN (J.T.) — Talks to be held today between HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, and U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright will focus on the latest developments in the peace process and bilateral ties, one official said on Monday. "They will discuss the possibility of increasing U.S. aid to Jordan and the outcomes of [U.S. President Bill] Clinton's visit to the region," Information Minister Nasser Judeh told a regular press briefing. Albright is expected in Amman today at the head of a U.S. delegation for a brief visit.

## Ocalan likens PKK fighters to 'murderers'

DIYARBAKIR (AFP) — Kurdish rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan on Sunday likened his own guerrilla fighters to "murderers" who had disobeyed his commands for 15 years. "In fighting, most of them are no better than murderers," Ocalan said about the fighters of his Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) on the Kurdish satellite television channel Med-TV late Sunday. "If they fought right, they could achieve victory," Ocalan said. "I have been telling them for 15 years. [...] They cannot understand my ideas."

## Egyptian 'God on earth' arrested

CAIRO (AFP) — An Egyptian who believed he was God's incarnation on earth and his 19 followers have been arrested and accused of contempt for religion, judicial officials said Monday. Mohammad Ibrahim Mahfuz, 60, and his disciples will face at least five years in prison if they are convicted following Sunday's arrest, the officials said.

## Five Israeli Arabs arrested

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Five Israeli Arabs have been arrested on suspicion of belonging to the Palestinian group Hamas, military radio reported Monday. The five, who hail from northern Israel, were arrested by the Israeli security services for allegedly providing the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) with weapons, the radio said.

## Mecca gears up for one million pilgrims

RIYADH (R) — Saudi Arabia's holy city of Mecca is gearing up to receive more than one million Muslim pilgrims during the holy month of Ramadan which begins later this week. The English-language Saudi Gazette said authorities have increased security, put hospitals on alert and deployed extra workers to serve worshippers who usually flock from all over the world to spend time at the cradle of Islam during Ramadan.

# PNC abolishes anti-Israeli clauses from charter, reaffirms commitment to peace

By Alia A. Toukan  
with agencies

GAZA — With the presence of U.S. President Bill Clinton, members of the Palestinian National Council (PNC) Monday overwhelmingly reaffirmed their commitment to the Palestinian-Israeli peace process, and to abrogating articles in their charter calling for the destruction of Israel.

Clinton, the first-ever U.S. president to pay an official trip to Palestinian territories, hailed the PNC move and pledged increased financial support to the Palestinian National Authority.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu praised the Palestinian move, but said this was not enough to clear the way for an Israeli troop pullback in the West Bank.

Under the Wye River land-for-security agreement, five per cent of the West Bank are to be transferred from Israeli control to joint jurisdiction on Friday.

However, Netanyahu said Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat would have to drop plans to declare a state in May, collect illegal weapons and accept Israel's criteria for the release of Palestinian political prisoners before Israel will hand over more land.

"If these commitments are taken and honoured, the Israeli government will carry out its part," Netanyahu said, but was

evasive when pressed whether he would meet the Friday deadline.

In his speeches yesterday, Arafat refrained from directly declaring his intent to establish a state next May.

For their part, the Palestinians of Gaza expressed both enthusiasm and hope that Clinton's visit signified an implicit recognition of a future Palestinian state.

But Clinton's helicopter landing at Gaza International Airport, which he officially inaugurated upon his arrival, was devoid of the usual ceremonies that mark visits between heads of state, such as the playing of national anthems.

Moreover, much to the disappointment of some PNC members, Clinton steered clear of seeming to advocate a Palestinian state, although at one point he spoke of the "legitimate rights of Palestinians."

For the first time in the history of the Palestinian movement, the Palestinian people and their elected representatives, now have a chance to determine their own destiny on their own land," said Clinton.

"I am proud to be the first American president to stand with the Palestinian people here," Clinton told the assembly of some 200 Palestinian dignitaries and members of his own delegation.

"You are... a people known through the world like an olive tree for your attachment to the land and



Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and U.S. President Bill Clinton applaud as members of the Palestinian National Council stand up and raise their arms during a vote to annul anti-Israeli clauses in the Palestinian National Charter on Monday in Gaza City (AFP photo)

now to the peace, a society that demands of yourselves what you rightly demand of others," he said.

"I thank you for believing that the land which gave the world Islam, Judaism and Christianity can be the home of all people who love

one God and respect every life our one God has created," Clinton continued.

"I want to emphasise that the future is possible because of the commitment you have made to live in peace and mutual respect with your neighbours side

by side," he said. Clinton also praised Arafat's efforts to push the peace process forward but issued a clear warning against the temptation to use violence to achieve what negotiations fail to obtain.

In his remarks after the

vote, Clinton said he would ask Congress next year for "another several hundred million dollars" to support development for Palestinians.

With Clinton watching from the head table, Arafat said the anti-Israeli clauses

10 years ago,  
U.S. recognised  
PLO

WASHINGTON (AFP) — President Bill Clinton's historic visit to Gaza Monday came exactly 10 years to the day after the United States recognised the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). On Dec. 14, 1988, the administration of President Ronald Reagan announced its readiness to enter into a "substantive dialogue" with the PLO despite Israel's refusal to recognise the Palestinian group.

The decision came after PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat fulfilled three conditions set by Washington for talks: recognition of Israel's right to exist, renunciation of terrorism and acceptance of U.N. resolutions recognising Israel. In announcing the dialogue with the PLO, Reagan described it as "one more step towards the beginning of direct negotiations between the parties, which alone can lead to such a peace." Following secret negotiations in Norway, Israel and the PLO agreed to mutual recognition under a preliminary peace accord signed in September 1993.

in the 1964 PLO Charter were revoked two years ago, but Netanyahu had insisted that vote was inadequate.

"I hope this will close this chapter forever," Arafat said.

(Continued on page 7)

## Israel reaffirms its commitment to water agreement

By Ahmad Khatib

AMMAN — Israel Monday assured Jordan that it is committed to the 1994 peace treaty, refuting recent statements by one of its ministers that it should reconsider a water agreement signed with the Kingdom.

Foreign Minister Abdul Ilah Khatib said Israeli Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon yesterday sent an official clarification on recent statements attributed to Agriculture Minister Rafael Eitan, who heads the right-wing Tsomet Party, that his country should re-examine water deals signed with the Kingdom.

"The government made its stand clear regarding Eitan's announcement and asked Israel for an explanation, which was positive and expressed the Israeli official position," Khatib told the Jordan Times last night.

In the elucidation, which was delivered to Khatib by Israeli Ambassador in Amman Oded Eran, Sharon stressed that Israel "will stand by all its commitments in the peace accord with Jordan and shall continue cooperation with Kingdom on various issues, including water, as outlined in the agreement between the two countries."

"If a need arises to examine the outcome of water

shortages that our area might face, Israel shall do it together in consultation and cooperation with Jordan," Sharon reiterated.

Last week, Jordan protested through its embassy in Tel Aviv to the Israeli Foreign Ministry demanding a clarification of Eitan's statement, which Khatib described as "strange, because it contravened all agreements signed between the two countries."

Khatib, in reply to a query by Deputy Amjad Majali during a Parliament session last week, said Israel denied Eitan's statements and said the announcement "does not represent the official Israeli stand, but [rather] the minis-

ter's personal point of view."

The peace treaty with Israel, signed in October 1994, guaranteed an additional 215 million cubic metres of water a year through new dams, a treatment plant and diversion projects.

Under the treaty, Jordan is currently storing winter water in Lake Tiberias to reclaim it in the summer. But of the total 215 million cubic metres promised, Jordan is currently receiving only about 60 million cubic metres.

Two months ago, Jordan and Israel began construction on a JD1.65 billion diversion dam to more effectively utilise 40 million

cubic metres of the Yarmouk River's overflow per year and regulate year-round inflow of water to the 110-kilometre-long King Abdullah Canal.

The Yarmouk currently provides the Kingdom with only 135mcm of its 220mcm full share, set by an Arab League committee in 1987.

Jordan's population, increasing by 3.5 per cent annually, will need 1.2 billion cubic metres of water per year between 1998 and 2000. But the Kingdom's current water resources only amount to 960 million cubic metres a year, according to official figures.

## Musa urges PNA to consult with Egypt, Jordan

CAIRO (AFP) — Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa called Monday for the Palestinians to coordinate with Egypt and Jordan on strategy for their talks with the Israelis on the final status of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Musa said he held talks here Sunday with Royal Court Chief Jawad Al Anani and Foreign Minister Abdul Ilah Al Khatib on the need for three-way coordination on the upcoming negotiations.

"Coordination between the Palestinians, Jordan and Egypt on the next stages" of the Israeli-Palestinian talks "is a must," Musa told reporters. "Egypt is ready to cooperate and coordinate without imposing anything on the Palestinians," said Musa.

"Currently the situation is very bad because of Israeli intransigence and the whole

world is waiting for [the results] of President Clinton's visit to the area," he said.

Bill Clinton went to Gaza City Monday on the first visit by a U.S. president to Palestinian territory, following talks with Israeli leaders Sunday in Jerusalem.

Clinton is trying to save the latest Israeli-Palestinian accord, signed in Washington in October but which has run into serious problems.

The Wye River memorandum called for a further 13 per cent Israeli military pullback in the West Bank in return for tougher Palestinian guarantees of Israeli security and the opening of final-status talks.

Israeli and Palestinian officials said Monday that a summit of Clinton, Netanyahu and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat would probably be held later in the day.

## U.N. pulls out more arms monitors from Iraq after key inspections

BAGHDAD (AFP) — More weapons experts left Baghdad on Monday at the end of controversial inspections to test Iraqi cooperation before the United Nations approves a review of sanctions.

U.N. sources said two teams of disarmament monitors pulled out Monday following a team that left Sunday for Bahrain.

A total of 80 experts had been brought into Iraq for intensive inspections from Tuesday to Sunday, adding to 120 workers based in the country.

A third team involved in the surprise monitoring would remain in Baghdad until the end of this week, said Caroline Cross, spokeswoman for the U.N. Commission Special

(UNSCOM) in charge of disarming Iraq.

They had also been scheduled to pull out Monday, but Cross said the delay would have "no effect" on a crucial report due Tuesday from U.N. arms chief Richard Butler.

The report will cover Iraq's level of compliance with a pledge on Nov. 14, which averted the threat of U.S. and British air strikes, to resume full cooperation with UNSCOM.

Butler's views will be submitted to U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan and play a key role in determining whether the Security Council gives the green light for a comprehensive review of sanctions imposed on Iraq for its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

## Judeh: Palestinian students deported because of violations they committed

By Tareq Ayyoub

AMMAN — Information Minister Nasser Judeh on Monday confirmed news reports that Jordan deported three Palestinian students to the self-rule areas but denied that they were handed over to Israeli authorities.

Speaking to reporters during the weekly news briefing, Judeh said the students, who held Palestinian passports, were expelled from the country for "violations" they had committed.

"They committed violations that harm the order and security of the country... therefore they were deported through [King Hussein] bridge to the areas controlled by the PNA (Palestinian National Authority)," the minister said.

"They were not handed over [to the Israeli authorities], they were [forced] to

return," Judeh added. He did not say when they were deported nor what the nature of the violations they committed were.

The minister was responding to a question on news reports in local press last week that Jordan has handed over three Palestinian students to Israeli authorities.

Mahmoud Abu Nada, 29, Hazim Waleed Husari, 23, and Mahmoud Hussein Mizayin, 26, were expelled from the country for allegedly being members of the Izzedine Brigades, the military wing of the Islamic Resistance Movement. Hamas, Islamic sources told the Jordan Times.

The sources said the leader of the Muslim Brotherhood Movement, Abdul Majed Thneibat, protested to Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh about the government's decision to expel the three Pales-

tinians, at a meeting at the Prime Ministry on December 6.

Thneibat declined to comment on his meeting with the premier.

Sources said Tarawneh told Thneibat that the presence in Jordan of three students, who were studying at the University of Jordan and the Arab Academy for Financial and Banking Sciences, violates the "gentlemen's" agreement with Hamas to allow only the group's political activists and not those who are members of the Izzedine Brigades to be present in the Kingdom.

Meanwhile, Judeh denied news reports that Jordan and the PNA have cooperated in the "security" preparations to receive U.S. President Bill Clinton during his visit to Gaza.

(Continued on page 12)

## Jazirah TV told to conform with media 'honour' code

CAIRO (AFP) — The Arab States Broadcasting Union (ASBU) has called for a Qatari television channel to conform to the body's code of honour after the station angered Arab countries by serving as a forum for opposition figures, the Egyptian press said Monday.

The ASBU general assembly in its Algiers meeting last week rejected Al Jazirah's membership application, said Egyptian Abdul Rahman Hafez, vice president of the pan-Arab union, in a statement published in the government

newspaper Al Akhbar.

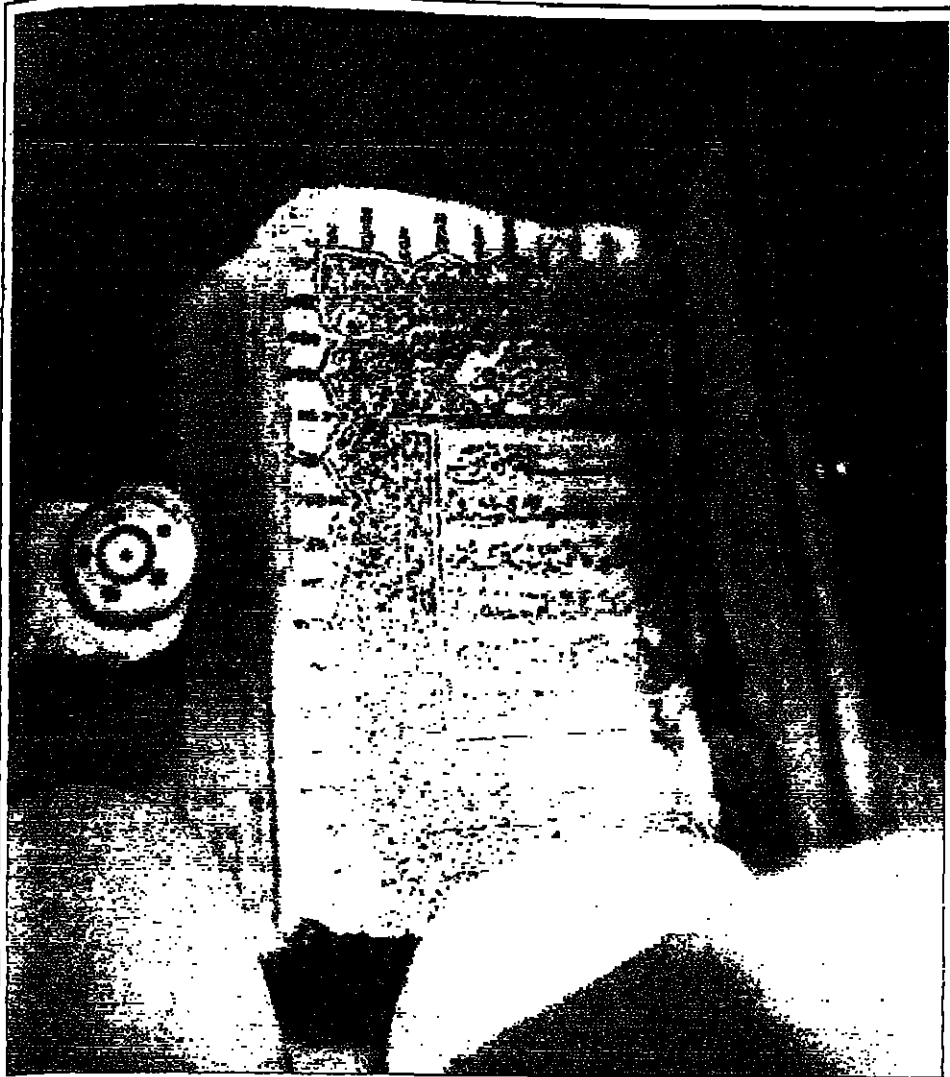
But at Egypt's request, the union, which comes under the auspices of the Arab League, decided to give the satellite channel six months "to conform with the Arab media code of honour," which "promotes brotherhood between Arab nations," he said.

Al Jazirah has angered several Arab countries, especially Egypt and Jordan, by its free tone and its broadcast called "Al Itjiah Al Mu'akis," which has often served as an open forum for opposition figures from most Arab countries.









**WORLD'S SMALLEST KORAN?** Jordanian Samih Shami on Tuesday displays what he claims is the world's smallest Koran, which was printed in the Ottoman period of rule around 300 years ago. Shami said he hoped the Koran, which measures 1.5 cm x 1.5 cm and was given to him by his late father, would be recognised by the Muslim World as a unique treasure and marvelled at by all those who see it (Reuters photo)

## JTC privatisation still a question following mobile phone service licensing decision

By Ghadeer Taher

**AMMAN** — While the government has announced it will issue the Jordan Telecommunications Corporation a licence to operate the country's second mobile phone service, it remains unclear when, how, and even if the state-owned firm will be privatised.

Minister of Post and Telecommunications Suleiman Hafez confirmed a news report in the Arabic daily *Al Ra'i* on Monday quoting him as saying the government will issue the previously decided-upon licence to the telecommunications company by the end of the year.

He declined further comment, however.

Industry sources say the company will need up to six months to lay the necessary infrastructure and expect that the firm will form a subsidiary to run the mobile and other services.

Sources, describing the government's move as "a piecemeal approach," said they had expected the licence to be issued as part and parcel of a strategy to

privatise the telecommunications firm. The government in October had suspended the sale of a 40 per cent stake of the company to a strategic partner after one of the two contenders withdrew from the race.

"The challenge before the government now is to come up with an action plan on how to privatise the firm," said an industry source. "Granting the JTC a licence without spelling out a holistic approach puts into question the government's seriousness to sell the company."

Industry sources said the government, wary of stepping into a political minefield, is taking its time in studying its options and could take several months before making a decision.

The decision to grant the company a licence was taken last year by the Cabinet, but a lawsuit filed by the country's sole mobile service operator, Fastlink, delayed the move.

It was not certain how the minister's announcement would impact on-going negotiations between the government and Fastlink to

reach an out of court settlement on the breach-of-contract case.

Fastlink, with over 60,000 subscribers, alleges that the government violated an agreement with the firm when it made a decision last October to grant a second mobile licence to the Jordan Telecommunications Corporation before the end of Fastlink's Nov. 1, 1998 exclusivity period, and without issuing an open tender.

The court ruling, now twice delayed, is expected on Dec. 19 unless the parties reach a settlement.

The government, desperate for foreign direct investment, has repeatedly stressed it was still committed to privatising the company and was studying various scenarios on how to proceed with the sale.

While it is almost certain that the strategic partner option is no longer on the table — a victory for the company's chairman and lawmakers who lobbied hard against the sale — the government is looking into other possibilities, including bringing in a foreign

technical partner to help upgrade services and marketing, offering an initial block of shares to the public on the Amman Financial Market, approaching institutional Arab investors, tapping into the wealth of high net worth individuals or a combination of these plans, but sources caution that political will must precede any decision.

Many opponents of strategic partnerships, wary of foreign domination of key sectors, point to the government's successful sale of a 33 per cent stake in the Jordan Cement Factories Company to French cement giant Lafarge, as a noteworthy example of privatisation.

The government, which owns 49.3 per cent of the cement company, concluded a JD72 million deal with the French firm without giving up management control in the company — a key concern for Jordanians.

The decision to suspend the telecommunications sale signalled the end of a stormy process, thrown off course many a time in the last two years, when the

privatisation process started in earnest.

But the suspension also carried a cost, critics of the move said.

The government, proponents maintain, missed a golden opportunity to bring in an international carrier to upgrade the services of the firm and introduce a business plan to take the company smoothly into the post-2002 era, which marks the end of the firm's exclusivity period.

Proponents of the sale also say the government lost out on hundreds of millions of dollars and has put into question the country's commitment to the privatisation programme, already marred by a fiery political debate.

"The initial reaction [to the suspension] is negative," commented an industry source shortly after Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh announced the decision. "But the government can turn this around if it has the political will to conclude a deal."

But time may not be on the government's side, observers warn.

## Man charged with murder of sister 19th victim of 'honour' killings this year

By Rana Hussein

**AMMAN** — A 22-year-old man was officially charged Monday by the criminal prosecutor with the premeditated murder of his 16-year-old sister in the Qweish area on Sunday, official sources said.

The suspect, who was not identified by the authorities, reportedly opened fire on

his sister Hala O. Sunday evening, then turned himself in to police saying he had committed a "crime of honour," the source said.

The source told the Jordan Times that the suspect claimed his sister was engaged in an "immoral" affair with a man.

"The brother claimed that he went and asked the man if he had had a relationship

with his sister, and the man confirmed it," the source said.

"The suspect then went to his house and shot his sister twice in the head," the source said.

Police contacted Monday evening by the Jordan Times confirmed the incident but declined further comment.

Criminal Prosecutor Hassan Abdullat, who is handling the case, will question other suspects before referring it to the Criminal Court.

Hala became the 19th woman reportedly murdered in the Kingdom this year in the name of "family honour."

Last year, around 25 women were reportedly killed in Jordan for the same reason.

## Winners in children's creativity contest receive prizes

By a Jordan Times Reporter

**AMMAN** — The Abdul Hamid Shorman Foundation on Sunday distributed awards to 114 children who won prizes in the 10th annual Children's Creativity Production Contest.

A total of 1,362 children from across the Kingdom took part in the contest, held by the foundation in cooperation with the Nor Al Hussein Foundation and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

Participants were divided into various age groups: from 16-18, 13-15, 10-12, seven to nine and six years and below.

The contest covered short story, article writing, poetry, theatre, drawing, handicrafts, music, photography, and computer.

Deputising for Her Majesty Queen Noor, HRH Princess Alia distributed the awards.

"We deeply believe that the child is an artist, a researcher and an explorer who seeks to build and organise his surroundings," said Abdul Majeed Shorman, chairman of the Shorman foundation.

"Hence, this contest was established to develop the individual talents of children as well as their creative thinking."

he added. Misrak Elias, UNICEF representative in Jordan, hailed the contest, saying that it encourages gifted children to make full use of their talents.

"The work of talented children... attests to the creativity and intellectual accomplishment that children can achieve when given the opportunity," she told attendees at the ceremony, held at the Palace of Culture.

The contest coincided with nationwide celebrations marking the 50th anniversary of the declaration of children's rights. The Convention on the Right of

the Child (CRC), which followed the declaration, stipulates the right of children to survival and development and the right to express their views.

"It is the responsibility of all of us parents, caregivers, teachers and leaders to give children the care and stimulation they need for healthy growth and development," said Elias.

Several of the children who won the prizes displayed their talents at the ceremony. One recited a poem he wrote and another played the guitar and sang a song he composed.

The prizes included wristwatches, books and certificates.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Princes visit Saudi hospital

**RIYADH (Petra)** — Their Royal Highnesses Princes Abdullah, Faisal and Ghazi visited the health affairs unit of the Saudi National Guard and were briefed by its executive director, Fahd Ben Abdullah Al Abdul Jabbar, on recent development in the health care system in Saudi Arabia. The Princes toured the King Fahd Hospital of the National Guard and received a briefing by Abdul Jabbar's assistant, Abdullah Ben Abdul Aziz Al Rabiea, before they left for Jeddah accompanied by Prince Abdul Aziz Ben Abdul Aziz, a Saudi royal court consultant.

### Majali receives Sudanese official

**AMMAN (Petra)** — House Speaker Abdul Hadi Majali on Monday received Yasin Omar Inam, a Sudanese National Council member, who delivered an oral message from the president of the council, Hassan Turabi. The two sides discussed bilateral issues, including parliamentary cooperation.

### Jordan-Iran committee meets

**AMMAN (Petra)** — A joint Jordanian-Iranian committee Monday signed a memorandum at the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs to activate two bilateral agreements signed in 1992 and 1997. The memo included several steps to develop tourist, cultural and religious issues. A number of officials from the two sides attended the event.

## Royal Jordanian marks 35th anniversary

**AMMAN (Petra)** — Royal Jordanian's deputy director general for passenger services affairs, Sami Majali, Monday said RJ could be a profitable company if it were not for its liabilities and accumulated debts.

Majali added that the national carrier's restructuring programme is aimed at ridding it of its debt and achieving profits.

Addressing journalists who toured the Passengers Services Department on the occasion of RJ's 35th anniversary, Majali also said the department has been awarded the ISO 9002 certificate, becoming the second international airline to obtain this certificate.

RJ will replace its five Tri-Star aircraft with Airbus 310s to reduce operational costs and standardise its fleet, said Majali. He noted that business class

compartments will be expanded to include 18 seats, up from the present 12 seats, due to a 30 per cent increase in the demand for business class seats.

Majali said all RJ aircraft will be equipped with heat monitoring equipment, which will receive information and analyse the situation of passengers.

The deputy director general for engineering and maintenance, Sami Ereikat, said his department has netted \$4,218,317 this year for carrying out maintenance on non-Jordanian aircraft in transit through Amman. The department has been accredited by the Civil Aviation Authority as well as the U.S. and French Civil Aviation Authorities.

Ereikat said his department employs 1,038 people who work in a number of administrative and technical sections.

By Francesca Ciriaci

**AMMAN** — Never lie. Never impose a news blackout. Never underestimate the scale and influence of the media, because even a small news item in the most inoffensive local paper could be picked up at any time by CNN or the BBC.

These were only a few of the golden rules that one international expert suggested to private and public sector tourism operators to minimise the devastating impact of terrorism, natural disasters or other crises affecting the tourism industry.

These pearls of wisdom — which should govern all public and private sector activities across the board — were supported by several examples of incidents and crises which made past and recent headlines as "catastrophes" due to poor communication strategies, lack of crisis management plans, and clumsy handling of the media.

On their side, journalists should also resist stereotypes, generalisations, and misconceptions for the sake of correct, factual, and accurate information, hundreds of tourism operators and media representatives agreed Monday at the beginning of a two-day seminar organised by the Ministry of Tourism

and Antiquities and the World Tourism Organisation (WTO).

"Recognise that if the media does not get the information from you, they will soon get it from someone else," said Bronwyn Gold Blyth, whose company boasts among its clients the tourism boards of various countries, one of world's top airlines, and one of the most prestigious hotel chains.

Addressing the first session of the seminar, senior travel writer Andrew Harvey, currently an editor at the Beirut Star, urged reporters to opt for a fresh, objective, and original style and abandon cheap generalisations.

"Media coverage must be part of the tourism industry," he said, adding that reporters should not "perpetuate misleading perceptions of the Middle East," while private and public sector tourism operators should "get their products right."

"People do not expect the tourism sector to provide them with five-lane highways to the heart of history, but there must be coordination and organisation," he said.

"For example, there are two flights to Beirut [today]. One at 7:30 p.m. and one at 8:00 p.m. Now, this is bad business."

The seminar, entitled

"Tourism and the Media: Shaping the Image of Destinations in the Middle East and North Africa," was opened by Tourism Minister Akei Biltaji and Information Minister Nasser Judeh, who highlighted in their brief remarks the correlation between political developments, media coverage, and the tourism industry.

However, although troubled by recurrent standoffs between Iraq and the U.N., Palestinian-Israeli violence, and the generally dubious reputation in most Westerners' eyes, the Middle East is slated to be the second fastest growing in-bound region, after East Asia, in the first two decades of the next millennium, according to World Tourism Organisation projections.

In the year 2020, said WTO Regional Representative for the Middle East Amr Abdul Ghaffar, international travellers alone will be spending \$5 billion a day worldwide.

According to the 138-member global organisation, arrivals in the Mideast region will increase from 14 million in 1995 to 69 million in 2020.

"We expect a growth in soft adventure and activity-related tourism. Scuba diving, trekking, excursions, cultural and study tourism

will replace the sand-and-sun type of holidays," Abdul Ghaffar said, during a presentation with WTO Chief of Communications Deborah Lührman on "The Outlook for Middle East Tourism."

"Cruise-ship tourism is also expected to grow steadily, since it meets the needs of the travellers of the future, who will have enough money, but not enough time to travel, [and] therefore will need to concentrate many activities in a short holiday."

Assuming that travellers will be more and more culturally sensitive, educated, experienced, and adventure-oriented, "destinations with the most luxurious five-star hotels will no longer be the most desired ones."

Hence the need for allocating more money for tourism promotion and media-related activities, the most cost-effective among promotional activities, Lührman said.

Participants are expected to present their conclusions and recommendations after a general debate at today's afternoon session, to be chaired by Biltaji. The seminar, which is being held at Le Meridien hotel, will include two morning sessions, one for journalists and one for tourism professionals.

## French film 'light, entertaining' contribution to European festival

By Dima Hamdan

**AMMAN** — "Un Air de Famille," the French contribution to the 10th European Film Festival, is a domestic story about families and their problems and insecurities. All of the events in the film take place during one night.

Un Air de Famille (Family Likeness) is about the Menard family, who are accustomed to having dinner every Friday at the fanciest restaurant in town. This evening, as usual, all members meet at the cafe that belongs to Henri, the eldest son. However, this is no ordinary occasion because it is the birthday of Yolande, the wife of the second son, Philip.

Unfortunately, a series of unhappy events take place on this night, spoiling the evening for everyone. Ariette, Henri's wife, decides not to show up for the birthday because she intends to get away from her husband and think

about their marriage. Philip is extremely concerned about a television interview he gave to represent the firm at which he works with Betty, the youngest sister. And Betty, in turn, has insulted the manager of the firm which causes a major embarrass-

### REVIEW

ment for her brother.

Despite all these troubles, the entire family tries to cope and enjoy their time for Yolande's sake, but all their attempts fail drastically. Consequently, their selfishness and the lack of bonding both with their mother and among themselves becomes exposed as they are all unable to associate with each others' problems or to evaluate their priorities as a family.

While none of the problems are solved immediately, we see a typical family setting, in its smallest



A scene from 'Un Air de Famille'

and most intimate details. There are no surprise endings, and everything resembles what all families encounter in real life.

All the elements in the film are basic: an almost theatrical setting, minimal music, and ordinary characters. However, the acting and dialogue were the most remarkable factors in the

film: most of the dialogue was about basic and silly issues, but it was spiced with sharp wit and humour, and performed by an ideal cast. Un Air de Famille is light, funny and extremely sarcastic. Its showing was quite timely to moderate the somewhat threatening effect from the two previous films.

## what's going on

**FILMS**  
 \* "Face On" at Books @ Cafe, Jabbal Amman at 8:30 p.m. (Tel. 5661771).  
 \* "Lute Women" at the British Council, Jabbal Amman at 6:00 p.m. (Children's film, "The Adventure of Pinocchio," will also be screened on Wednesday Dec. 16 at 5:00 p.m.).  
**CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION**  
 \* Christmas celebration with theatrical performances at Instituto Cervantes, Jabbal Amman on Wednesday Dec. 16 at 6:00 p.m. (Tel. 4610838).  
**EUROPEAN FILM FESTIVAL**  
 \* Italian film "L' albero delle pere" at 5:00 p.m.  
 \* Netherlands film "Karateka" at 8:00 p.m. (to be shown again on Wednesday Dec. 16 at 5:00 p.m.).  
 \* All films, with subtitles in English, are screened at the Royal Cultural Centre.  
**EXHIBITIONS**  
 \* One-day exhibition of art works by Jordanian and foreign artists at the

Musician Cafe, Sweifish (Tel. 5929880).  
 \* Exhibition of Nabatean silver jewelry at the Jordan Design and Trade Centre, off Wadi Sagar Street, until Dec. 31 (Tel. 5699141/2).  
 \* Display of posters marking the anniversary of the International Declaration of Human Rights at the Greater Amman Municipality city hall, Ras Al 'Ain, until Dec. 17.  
 \* "The Warm Winter" — works by several artists at Orfali Art Gallery, Um Uthman (Tel. 5526932), until Feb. 1.  
 \* Photography exhibition "Entrepreneur" (a photography trip from Morocco to Turkey) at the French Cultural Centre, Jabbal Amman, until Dec. 17.  
 \* The Tenth Anniversary Exhibition of Contemporary Arab Artists at Darat Al Funun, Jabbal Weibdeh (Tel. 4643251/2), until Jan. 28.  
 \* Photography exhibition entitled "Windows and Doors" by Hani Hourani at Rasmia Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5537598), until Dec. 18.



## Far-right snatches Rome from the left

ROME (AFP) — The post-fascist far-right National Alliance (AN) snatched Rome from the left in a photo-finish in Sunday's local elections, in which the abstention rate hit a record high.

The AN's candidate Silvano Morra sneaked just ahead of the centre-left's Rosolino Napolitano in the run-off second round vote with 51.1 per cent of the vote. Turnout was only 43 per cent.

AN leader Gianfranco Fini hailed the result as a "new departure" for the right-wing opposition.

The left's surprise defeat in the Italian capital — where Napolitano had been leading in the first round with 46.8 per cent against 44.7 per cent for her rival — cast a shadow over the otherwise good performance by the left in the rest of the country.

The left held on to the province of Foggia, in the south, and Massa Carrara in the north, and took Benevento in the south, which had been held by the right.

In the seven cities which went to the polls, the left retained the municipalities of Massa, Sondrio, Brescia and Pisa, while the right hung on to Pescara and took Vicenza from the left. The separatist Northern

League comfortably retained control of the city council in Treviso near Venice.

Italian political commentators remarked upon the unusually high abstention level, 42 per cent of the more than 4.3 Italians called to the polls on Sunday. "If it had a spokesman, the abstentionist party could legitimately claim to be the most important movement that Italy has ever seen," the centre-left Rome daily La Repubblica said in an editorial.

The paper slammed the nation's political parties for "having lost the capacity to mobilise the country."

"People are fed up with old politics, fine words, and promises which are never kept," the daily La Stampa commented, saying that the charitable sector in Italy had never been so popular as today.

"Social commitment grows in proportion to the falling off of interest in politics," the paper owned by the prominent industrialist Agnelli family noted.

The Milan daily Il Corriere della Sera said the left had everything to lose in the general disillusionment while La Stampa said the left ran the risk of disappointing an ever more sceptical country.

## Kohl hits new government over NATO flap with U.S.

BONN (AP) — Speaking out for the first time since his election defeat, former chancellor Helmut Kohl scolded Germany's new government for challenging the United States over NATO nuclear weapons strategy.

In an interview with the Sunday weekly Welt am Sonntag, Kohl said it was "incomprehensible" that his successors had launched a debate about whether to keep the policy that allows NATO to launch a nuclear attack first.

"Everyone knows that we west Germans were the main beneficiary of the Americans' nuclear protection during the cold war," said Kohl, who lost September elections that brought a centre-left government to power.

"If one knows what the Americans did for us, then one also knows what impression a debate launched by Germany about first use of nuclear weapons makes in

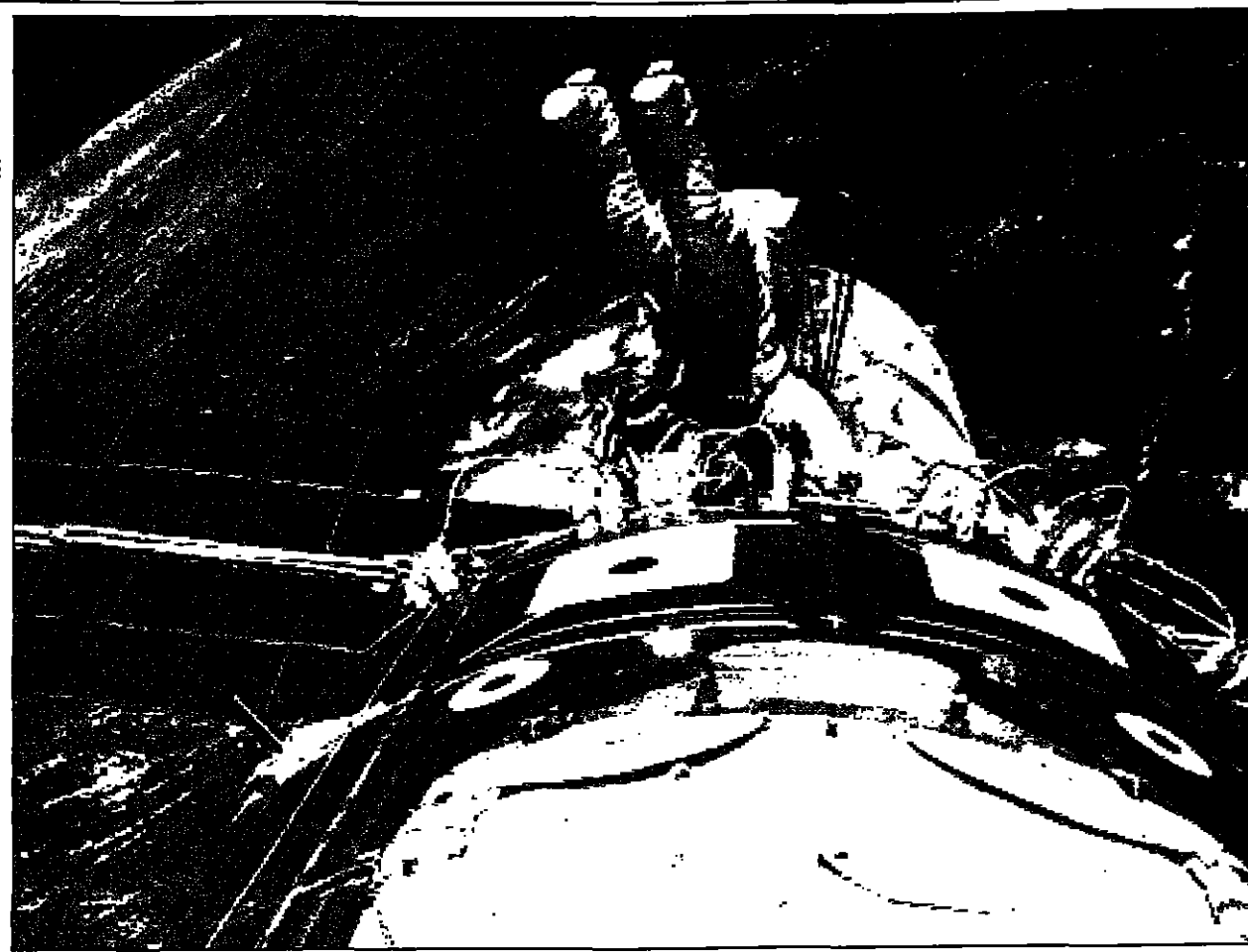
America," Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer has suggested that, with the cold war over, NATO should drop the nuclear threat and adopt a "no first use" policy. The Clinton administration has flatly ruled that out.

The United States believes NATO still needs the nuclear threat, particularly to deter attacks with chemical or biological arms.

Fischer is a leader of the Greens, an environmentalist party with an anti-NATO tradition. The Greens are the junior governing partner of Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, a Social Democrat.

In an interview aired Sunday night on German television ZDF, Kohl said that despite political differences, he had discussions since his defeat with the new chancellor and foreign minister.

"One has to talk when it's about our country," he said, declining to detail specifics.



Shuttle Endeavour astronaut James Newman holds on to rails of the Unity space module as he completes work on the International Space Station during the final spacewalk of the mission, Dec. 12. The Zarya module can be seen beyond Newman. The crew left the International Space Station Dec. 13 after creating it last week by linking the American-built Unity and the Russian power module Zarya (Reuters photo)

## Yugoslav army kills Albanians in border clash

PRISTINA, Serbia (R) — Yugoslav border troops killed an unspecified number of armed ethnic Albanians who were trying to cross into Kosovo from Albania, the province's Serbian-run media centre said Monday.

Early in the morning, between 2 a.m. and 7 a.m., large groups of armed Albanians tried repeatedly to cross illegally from Albania to Yugoslavia in the region of the border posts Gorazup and Liken.

West of Prizren, the centre said in a statement.

"There was a clash with the Yugoslav border guards and there are killed and wounded among the Albanians," it said.

The army said it had not suffered any casualties in the clash, the second reported in 11 days.

On Dec. 3, border guards said they killed eight ethnic Albanians they said were trying to bring arms into Kosovo.

Yugoslavia has protested to Albania several times over earlier incidents on their common border, saying they were a deliberate

ploy to upset a shaky peace in Kosovo, where separatist ethnic Albanian guerrillas fought Serbian security forces earlier this year.

At least 1,500 were killed in eight months of fighting and some 250,000 driven from their homes in a fierce crackdown on the population by Serbian security forces.

The two sides stopped fighting in October, when Yugoslavia withdrew many of its forces under threat of NATO airstrikes, but there have been sporadic violations since then.

The international community, which has hundreds of unarmed "verifiers" in the region, is concerned fighting might resume when warmer weather comes in the spring unless Belgrade and Kosovo's ethnic Albanian leaders can agree an autonomy plan.

Kosovo's ethnic Albanians, who outnumber Serbs in the province nine to one, are demanding independence after 10 years of harsh direct rule from Belgrade.

## Third lawyer warned as Anwar trial hears of 'trumped up charges'

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) — The judge in the trial of Anwar Ibrahim threatened a third defence lawyer with contempt of court proceedings Monday following allegations of "trumped up charges" against the ousted Malaysian deputy premier.

The threat followed a sharp exchange between Defence Counsel Christopher Fernando and prosecution witness Musa Hassan, deputy director of the Malaysian police force's criminal investigation department.

Fernando accused Musa of going out of his way to make "very serious allegations" against

Anwar earlier this year when he replied to an affidavit by Anwar's partner Solaimalai Nallakuruppan alleging police brutality.

Nalla was arrested in July for allegedly possessing bullets and faces a mandatory death penalty if convicted in a separate trial which has been adjourned until January. His affidavit alleging police brutality was dated Aug. 25, a week before Anwar was dismissed.

The serious allegations against Anwar were done maliciously and have no connection with Nalla's affidavit, Fernando said, referring

to the response filed by Musa in September.

Musa conceded that his response "mentioned the misbehaviour of the accused" but said it was "not true" that the allegations were malicious and unconnected, prompting Fernando to accuse Musa of "mala fide" (bad faith).

"These are trumped up charges. We will show that there were serious efforts made to fabricate charges. One way is to show what happened in Nalla's case," the defence counsel said.

Presiding judge Augustine Paul said Fernando was making "serious allegations" against the authorities.

"If you fail to prove it, I shall institute contempt of court proceedings," Paul said.

The judge has already sentenced one of Anwar's lawyers, Zainur Zakaria, to three months jail for contempt after he filed a court application seeking the removal of two prosecutors accused of fabricating evidence.

Zainur has appealed the sentence, while contempt proceedings against a second lawyer have been dropped after he apologised for the way in which a letter attached to the application was used without his knowledge.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Indian government unveils women's bill amid protests

NEW DELHI (R) — The Indian government introduced controversial legislation Monday which proposes setting aside a third of the seats in parliament and state legislatures for women. "The introduction of the women's reservation bill in the Lok Sabha (lower house) is a historic victory for our democracy and women," Parliamentary Affairs Minister Madan Lal Khurana said. But the bill drew noisy protests from deputies representing regional groups, who said the legislation did not reserve seats specifically for Muslim women and women belonging to backward communities. "Take back the women reservation bill," lawmakers from the regional Rashtriya Janata Party, Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samajwadi Party shouted as they stormed into the centre of the house. The introduction of the bill drew applause from members of parliament (MPs) belonging to the ruling coalition and the main opposition party, Congress, which had earlier signalled support for reserving seats for women. Last July the ruling coalition led by the Bharatiya Janata Party was forced to postpone introduction of the bill after angry lawmakers snatched the papers from Law Minister M. Thambbi Durai. Women's groups have been campaigning for reserved seats to increase their representation. Women MPs currently account for less than 10 per cent of the 545-member lower house. The bill, which would amend the constitution, needs the support of two-thirds of the lower house of parliament.

### Czech president suffering from respiratory problems

PRAGUE (AFP) — Czech President Vaclav Havel, who has a long history of health problems, is suffering from a respiratory ailment after a viral infection, his spokesman said Monday. Once a heavy smoker, the 62-year-old former dissident playwright underwent an operation in December 1996 for lung cancer and has repeatedly suffered from bronchitis. He also had 35 centimetres of intestine removed in an emergency operation in Austria in April. He later underwent a tracheotomy, treatment to clear his bronchial tubes, and had an abscess on the abdominal wall removed. He also suffered a heart attack in August. His spokesman said Monday Havel had a slight temperature and was undergoing treatment at his home. However at this point no hospitalisation was necessary, he added. Details of his medical treatment would be made public Wednesday. Havel's appointments between Monday and Wednesday have been cancelled or rescheduled. He had been due to meet Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar, on a three-day visit to the Czech Republic, Monday. Havel was also due to hold talks in the early part of this week with the new European Commission head of delegation in the Czech Republic, Ramiro Cebrian; General Henry Shelton, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff; and moderate Kosovo Albanian leader Ibrahim Rugova.

### Conference aims to empower Nepalese women

KATHMANDU (AFP) — An international conference on women's empowerment in Nepal opened here Monday to identifying and promoting ways for women to contribute to national development, organisers said. The three-day conference, entitled "Breaking New Ground", was organised by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) mission to Nepal and will include discussion forums and field visits with women's groups in the rural districts of Chitawan, Rupaidehi and Nuwakot. "The strategic objective for women's empowerment adopted by USAID in Nepal is unique among USAID country missions," said Joanne Hale, USAID mission director. "This approach goes beyond the traditional mainstream, which includes gender issues in separate sector projects of the portfolio," she said. Discussion forums will help to identify empowerment practices from around the world for "integrating gender into development," Hale said. Development agencies from 23 countries are represented at the conference. Nepal's Minister for Women and Social Welfare Meena Pandey and U.S. Embassy Charge d'Affaires Janet Bogue attended the conference opening.

### Italian military helicopter crashes in thick fog

TURIN, Italy (R) — An Italian military helicopter crashed in thick fog near the northern city of Turin Monday, killing all four police officers on board, upper house of parliament speaker Nicola Mancino said. Interrupting a session of the Senate in Rome to give news of the crash, Mancino said General Franco Romano, commander of carabinieri police in the northern Piemonte region, was among the victims. The helicopter lost radio contact with the control tower of Volpiano's military airport, on Turin's outskirts, shortly after take-off and crashed some 200 metres from the runway. Firefighters found the four bodies after searching in heavy fog. ANSA said.

### Boy wins Lego championship by creating a monster

IRVINE, California (AP) — Some might say 11-year-old Thomas Michon is the Frank Lloyd Wright of Lego builders — with a little Stephen King thrown in for good measure. The Irvine boy won first place in the Lego national championship over the weekend by creating a monster with flapping wings attacking cars on a bridge. The effort won him a trip to the Legoland theme park, scheduled to open in March in Carlsbad. There, he'll be presented with a statue in his likeness made of the interlocking plastic bricks. "I think I may end up with a job building things," said the boy, who has been playing with Lego bricks since he was 3. At age 5, he won the Lego World Cup in Denmark. He spends about 20 hours each week building things from the nearly 80,000 Lego pieces in his collection. He also plays baseball, computer games and the violin.

### Village couple wed in helicopter

BANGALORE, India (AP) — Last year, red pepper trader Karin Abbas married his wife atop an elephant. This year, wishing a memorable wedding for his younger brother too, Abbas had him married in an airborne helicopter. Sunday, thousands of residents of Alipur village in Karnataka state, who had never seen a helicopter before, gathered to watch the "bird" descend on a dry farm field. The groom and bride took off in a helicopter, accompanied by two Islamic priests, who administered the vows during the 20-minute flight. "It was such an extraordinary feeling that words fail me," said Zamin Abbas, the groom. The Abbas family could not afford the normal rates for hiring a helicopter, but the owner reduced the price because of the novelty of the wedding.

## Chinese dissident back from exile faces subversion charges

BEIJING (AP) — Foreign reporters will be barred from the most high-profile prosecution of a dissident in China in two years, a government official said Monday.

Three days before Wang Youcai's trial on subversion charges, court officials in Hangzhou city have not decided if any public observers will be allowed to attend, said a Zhejiang provincial government spokesman, who only gave his surname, Bao.

Wang was a principal organiser of the would-be China Democracy Party, which sought to challenge the Communist Party's 49-year ban on opposition politics. He was among the first to announce the opposition group's forma-

tion in June.

His trial Thursday will likely be the first of several against prominent dissidents involved in the party. Xu Wenli and Qin Yongmin, arrested at the start of the crackdown two weeks ago, have also been accused of endangering state security, a catchall crime that includes subversion.

A long-exiled dissident who sneaked into China to help boost the democracy party's organisation, Wang Ce, has also been charged with endangering state security, the Hong Kong-based Information Centre of Human Rights and Democratic Movement reported Monday.

Wang Ce, who left China in 1984, earned a

Ph.D. in Hawaii and then settled in Spain, slipped into China via Macau in October.

Authorities in Hangzhou city detained him on Nov. 2 immediately after he met with Wang Youcai, the Information Centre said.

Two other activists detained along with Wang Ce — Li Li, who had been living in France, and Huang Heging, a local activist from Zhejiang province — remain in detention.

Wang Ce was an active participant in Chinese dissident politics abroad and had been refused permission previously to return to China, the group said.

The charge against Wang Ce probably stems

from his plans to give \$1,000 to Wang Youcai to buy a computer, the Hong Kong-based Information Centre said.

Wang Youcai first rose to prominence as a student leader of the democracy demonstrations in Tiananmen Square in 1989. He would be the most influential member of the dissident community to be put on trial since fellow student leader Wang Dan in 1996.

Although foreign reporters have been barred, judicial officials in Hangzhou have not decided whether the trial will be closed to the public, said the Zhejiang spokesman, Bao.

Prominent trials almost always result in guilty verdicts in China's politi-

cally malleable judicial system.

Wang Youcai's efforts to form a defence have been frustrated.

One lawyer who planned to take the case, Wang Wenjiang, has been detained three times in the past two days and was believed to be in custody Monday, the Information Centre said. Calls to the lawyer's office for comment were not answered.

Despite the intensity of the crackdown, small but bold groups in China have called on the government to release the democracy advocates.

A friend of Wang Youcai in his hometown in Zhejiang province gathered signatures from 160 farmers, private bus-

nessmen and others arguing he had been exercising legitimate rights and appealing for his immediate release, the Information Centre reported.

Exiled dissidents also have been lobbying on behalf of the democracy campaigners. Monday, 22 of them released a statement calling on U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan and governments and human rights groups to pressure China for the release of Xu, Qin, Wang Youcai and Wang Ce.

The statement from the Washington-based Free China Movement said the crackdown showed China was violating rights protected under two key U.N. human rights treaties Beijing signed in the past 14 months.



Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen shakes hands with his Malaysian counterpart Mahathir Mohamad during their bilateral meeting in Hanoi. Hun Sen, in Vietnam for an official visit, was set to make a last-ditch push for Cambodian membership with a series of meetings with Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) leaders (Reuters photo)

## Doors shutting on Cambodian bid for early ASEAN entry

HANOI (AFP) — Cambodia's last-ditch attempt to gain immediate entry into ASEAN virtually collapsed Monday when Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong ruled out an 11th-hour deal on the eve of a regional summit here.

"There is no consensus on this," said Goh, whose country along with Thailand and the Philippines has opposed Phnom Penh's entry ahead of Tuesday's summit of the Association of South East Asian Nations.

Asked if there was a chance that Cambodia would be admitted at the last minute, Goh said: "No. The foreign ministers have reflected their leaders' position on this."

ASEAN foreign ministers at preparatory meetings for the summit failed to reach consensus on giving immediate entry to Cambodia.

Singapore is the chairman of the policy-making standing committee of ASEAN, which also includes Brunei, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia,

Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam.

Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, who supports Cambodia's bid, said: "I really have no idea," when asked whether Cambodia had a chance of becoming a member during the summit.

Cambodia, now holding observer status in ASEAN, was due to join the grouping in July 1997 but its entry was deferred after strongman Hun Sen ousted then co-premier Prince Norodom Ranariddh amid heavy fighting in Phnom Penh.

Cambodia is now claiming membership in ASEAN after the establishment of a new coalition between the parties of the two leaders following fresh elections in July.

Hun Sen, now Cambodia's sole premier, meanwhile pledged quick political progress in his country as he pressed his case.

He made the promise at a bilateral meeting with Thai Prime Minister Chuan

Leekpai, saying "outstanding conditions will be fulfilled" for Cambodia's entry into ASEAN, according to Thai spokesman Akapol Sorasuchan.

Hun Sen reiterated the point that what is left in Kampuchea's (Cambodia's) political situation and government formation is the make-up of a senate or upper house or a constitutional amendment," he told reporters.

"He believes that will be completed in a short period of time."

The Thai spokesman said it was up to ASEAN members to decide whether a "final conclusion" was possible based on the assurances.

"We assured Hun Sen that we would do our best to sort out differences," Akapol said.

Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines want the newly-formed coalition in Phnom Penh to take fuller shape, particularly with regard to the creation of an upper house of parliament. Host Vietnam was hoping

the three countries would drop their objections to Cambodia's entry in time for the summit.

The leaders were scheduled to meet for an informal dinner late Monday during which Cambodia was expected to be a major issue.

Philippine President Joseph Estrada, asked about Manila's position, said on arrival: "We're all for having them as a member but we have to discuss this."

Thai Premier Chuan was the first to cast doubt on Cambodia's hopes of immediate entry to ASEAN, saying before leaving Bangkok that Phnom Penh must wait until it is fully ready.

"Cambodia will certainly be a member of ASEAN, the problem lies in differences in the committee of member countries considering the problem," he said.

Chuan stressed the nine-member group "has a target of 10 countries," adding Cambodia's entry was a matter of "timing" and "readiness."

## Rwandan ex-militia chief found guilty of genocide

ARUSHA, Tanzania (AFP) — The international tribunal trying suspected ringleaders from Rwanda's 1994 civil war Monday found former Interahamwe militia leader Omar Serushago guilty of genocide.

Serushago, who headed the extremist Hutu militia in the northwestern Gisenyi region, had pleaded guilty earlier in the day to four of five genocide-related counts, including being "responsible for murders and grave attacks on the physical and mental integrity of the Tutsi population with the aim of destroying all or part of that ethnic or racial group," the independent Hirondelle news agency reported.

He also pleaded guilty to torturing Tutsis. The prosecutor withdrew charges of rape — which counts as a crime against humanity — after Serushago denied them.

He was just the third person to be found guilty by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, set up in the northern Tanzanian town of Arusha in November 1994, after former prime minister

Jean Kambanda, who also pleaded guilty, and Jean-Paul Akayesu, who was mayor of the central commune of Tabu, and pleaded not guilty.

Both were sentenced to life in prison, but are appealing to the appellate court shared by this tribunal and the U.N. tribunal in The Hague, which is judging suspects accused of committing atrocities in the former Yugoslavia.

Serushago, whose pre-sentencing hearing is due on Jan. 29, was arrested on June 10 in Cote d'Ivoire and transferred to Arusha a month later. He is represented by a Tanzanian lawyer, Mohamed Ismael.

The tribunal was set up by the U.N. Security Council to try those held responsible for the 1994 genocide, in which between 500,000 and 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed.

Twenty-eight other suspects held in a specially built U.N. jail in Arusha are undergoing trials, or waiting for them to begin, prompting criticism that the tribunal is taking an inordinately long time to conclude cases.

The tribunal must designate the country where each con-

victed defendant must serve his or her prison term, but so far only four European countries have offered to accept prisoners.

Furthermore, Sweden and Switzerland, which along with Norway and Belgium have offered their prisons, are willing to take only prisoners who have dual nationality or have been resident in those states.

The judges on the tribunal, which does not have the power to impose the death sentence, believe convicted defendants should serve their time in Africa, for humanitarian and cultural reasons.

Again, there have been few offers to the tribunal. Only Rwanda has offered to imprison the perpetrators of its genocide, an unacceptable destination for anyone found guilty of killing the friends and relatives of those now in power.

Rwandan courts are also conducting their own genocide trials, and have handed down some 100 death sentences.

In April, 22 people found guilty of genocide were shot dead in public executions

around Rwanda. More than 130,000 others are languishing in overcrowded prisons on suspicion of taking part in the genocide.

The U.N. tribunal's president, judge Laity Kama, has asked his own country, Senegal, to offer places in its prisons to house those convicted in Arusha, but has yet to receive an answer.

The United Nations, he said, had pledged to finance the cost of keeping those convicted by his court in prison and any necessary building work.

"According to international standards, condemned prisoners must have decent conditions, sufficient food (and) health care," he said.

However, he concedes that even if financial arrangements could be made to improve existing prisons, a "psychological block" remains in many African countries to providing cell space to those convicted.

"One has to find a way to explain to the population why a foreigner found guilty of genocide should benefit from better prison conditions than a chicken thief from their own country," Kama said.

## East Timorese students demonstrate against violence, oppression

DILI, East Timor (AFP) — Hundreds of students from three universities and academies here Monday staged a demonstration at the local parliament to protest against the violence and oppression by the Indonesian armed forces.

"Stop Violence," and "Halt the oppression of the East Timorese people," some of the posters carried by the students read.

The students, who came from the University of East Timor, the Polytechnic and

the Higher School of Economic Sciences, demanded the Indonesian military be held accountable for a recent wave of violence against civilians in the troubled territory.

They cited cases of man-handling and alleged torture of civilians in the Alas region following an attack on a military post there last month.

The students also cited the military's refusal to allow a fact finding team whose formation had been approved

by the local government, to visit the Alas region to verify the reports of violence against the local population.

No officials came out to discuss the issue with the students, who said they would remain in front of the building and spend the night there until they are received by officials.

The students also said they planned to hold a street rally Tuesday.

The past months have seen renewed attacks on soldiers as well as their

civilian collaborators that have left at least five dead. The resurgence of pro-independence activities followed the fall of former President Suharto who had ordered the invasion of the former Portuguese colony in 1975.

Indonesian annexed East Timor the following year in a move never recognised by the United Nations and most states, and after Suharto's fall, his successor B.J. Habibie offered the territory broad autonomy.

## Experts piece together Thai air crash clues

SURAT THANI, Thailand (R) — Police and volunteers combed the wreckage of a Thai Airways jet Monday seeking clues to why it crashed, killing 101 of 146 people on board.

About 200 police, army search and rescue teams and local volunteers waded through the flooded plantation where the Airbus A310-200 came down in driving rain Friday.

"We are retrieving the wreckage and collecting the evidence as much as we can," Police Colonel Opas Samasen, leading the operation, told Reuters.

Thousands of pieces would be collected and painstakingly reassembled in a nearby aircraft hangar so investigators could establish the cause of the accident, officials said.

The plane's cockpit voice and flight data recorders, recovered after the crash, would soon be sent to Canada or the Netherlands for decoding, officials said.

The 101 dead included the pilots. The 45 survivors, who included 12 foreigners, were rescued after crawling or being pulled from the burning wreckage. Survivors said swift action by local volunteers saved many lives.

The director-general of Thailand's Civil Aviation Department, Sawat Sithiwong, confirmed Monday that Surat Thani airport, where the Airbus was trying to land, lacked some equipment to allow aircraft to land safely in bad weather.

Sawat told a news conference the airport's Instrument Landing System (ILS) had been removed about six months ago to allow runway extension work. The airport serves the popular island resort of Koh Samui and sees heavy tourist traffic.

But he said the absence of the equipment would not have been the only cause for the crash of the plane because the airport had a radio navigation system commonly used at other airports.

"I don't think that (the absence of the ILS) would be the only cause of the crash," Sawat said.

The airport's radio navigation system had been checked as recently as September, he said.

Aviation sources say the radio navigation system is less accurate because it relies on visual sighting of the runway once the aircraft has descended to 500 feet.

Survivors of the plane crash said the pilot had complained of poor visibility, had twice attempted and failed to land the aircraft and was making a third attempt when it plunged in the dark into flooded swampland about three km from the airport.

The aircraft caught fire after hitting the ground and then exploded. Wreckage was scattered over a wide area of about one square km.

The chairman of Thai Airways, Thamnoon Wanglee, dismissed suggestions that the state of the aircraft or its age may have contributed to the accident.

The Airbus, fitted with General Electric engines, was delivered in April 1986 and had logged 23,000 flight hours.

"I don't think the condition of the plane is one of the reasons behind the crash," Thai Airways has strict maintenance standards and regularly checks its aircraft," he said.

A local army unit of about 200 soldiers brought cranes and steel cutters to the crash site Monday to cut up the big bits of the fuselage prior to their removal and reassembly.

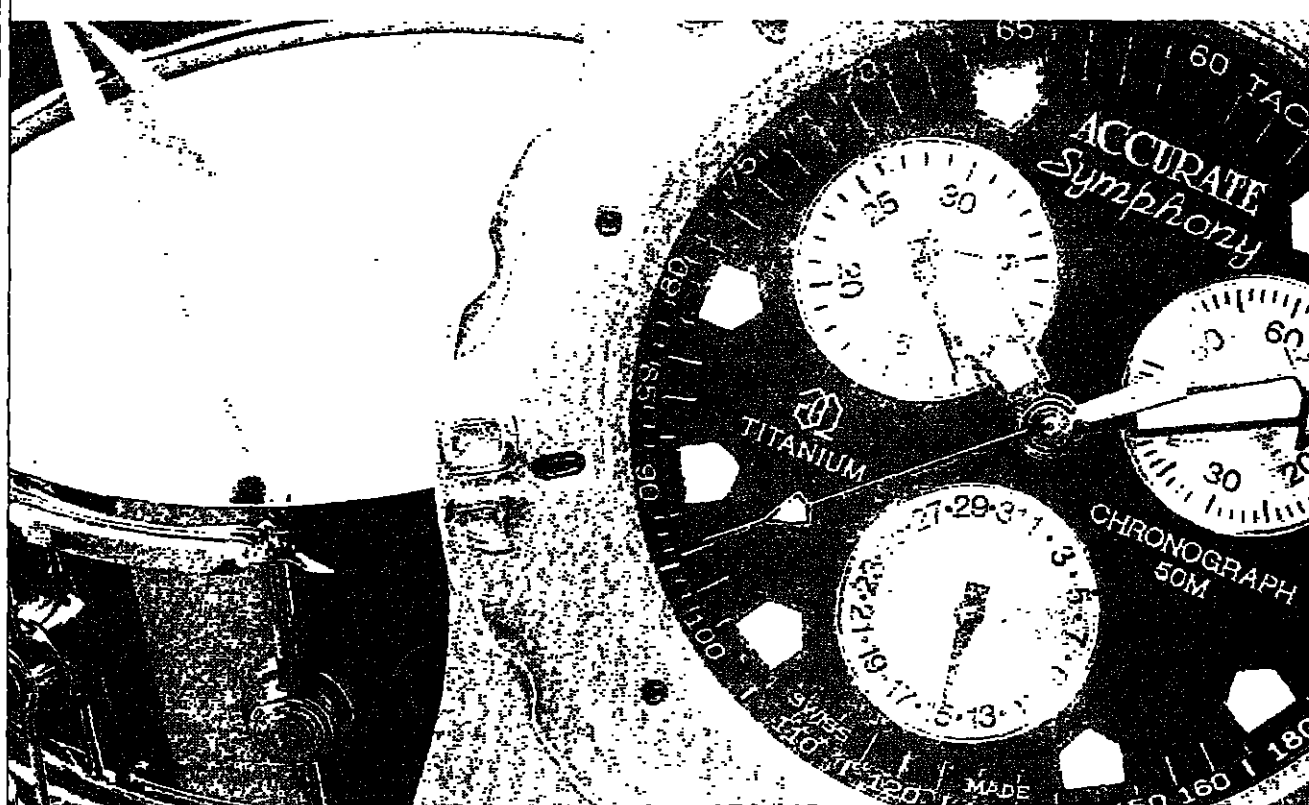
"We plan to retrieve and collect all of the pieces before dark today. After that we will try to reassemble the plane as much as possible so that the national accident investigation committee can establish the cause of the accident," the head of the army team, Yodchai Yingyod, told Reuters. A team of experts from the Airbus Industrie's headquarters in Toulouse, southwestern France, have arrived to help the investigation. They declined to discuss the investigation.

Survivors of the crash Monday praised the efforts of local volunteers, who reached the plane well ahead of police and army units and saved many lives through their swift action.

Patiyudh Boonrod, the airport duty manager at the time of the disaster, said local people risked their own lives to get survivors out of the burning wreckage.

"Volunteers arrived at the scene within minutes and risked their own safety to save lives as the plane was about to explode," Patiyudh said. "The immediate action of all parties concerned spared several lives."

## Watches that are composed. Not made.



Water Resistant 50 m and 100 m

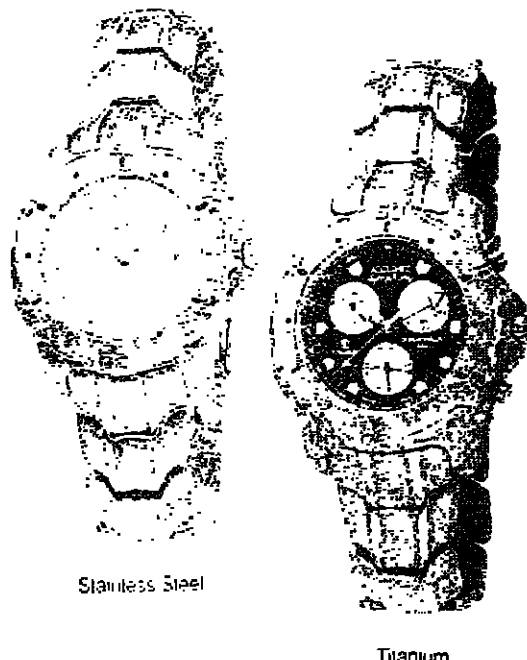
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## A clear message

IT LOOKED like statehood, it sounded like statehood. It even felt like statehood when U.S. President Bill Clinton addressed the Palestinian National Council (PNC) following its cancellation of "anti-Israel" clauses in the Palestinian National Charter.

Clinton's words — "the Palestinian people and their elected representatives now have a chance to determine their own destiny on their own land" — finally articulated the inevitable: a Palestinian state on Palestinian national soil.

The overwhelming support of the PNC for the revision of the charter — only a few dozen of 900 present remained seated during the vote — should send a strong message to Israel. The majority of Palestinians, young and old alike, believe that the path of peace is in the best interests of their future generations and the region as a whole.

Jordanians, most of whom lend their full support to the legitimate and peaceful struggle for Palestinian statehood, felt pride in the PNC's decision and the Palestinian latest step forward.

But on both banks of the Jordan River, all parties must be wondering: is Israel receiving the messages that its peace partners are sending?

Benjamin Netanyahu's response to the PNC's gesture yesterday was rather disheartening. While the Palestinians awaited a reciprocal gesture — such as the release of Palestinian political activists who remain in Israeli jails in contradiction to the spirit of the Wye accord — Israel answered caustically that the decision was not enough to reverse the government's decision to freeze a further West Bank pullback, required under the Wye accord by Friday. Additionally, Netanyahu insists that Arafat now publicly renounce any plan to unilaterally declare a Palestinian state when the interim peace accords expire next May and further demands proof that the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), is taking action to halt violent protests that were, after all, spawned by Israel's refusal to release prisoners in violation of the Wye accords.

It's an all too familiar story of no give and all take.

However, it is too difficult to remain uninspired by yesterday's events in Gaza itself, so Jordanians encourage their Palestinian brethren to stay the course in the best of faith. But they still demand that Israel do the right thing, not the least of which is to recognise yesterday's message.

## ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Fahed Faneek said that although the finance minister's budget statement is basically an economic review of current circumstances and future hopes, it receives more attention than the actual figures of proceeds, expenditures and deficit. The statement includes a statement of aims, such as supporting monetary and financial stability, achieving economic and social goals and justice, and support for the armed forces and security systems, said the writer. The remarks also list a number of excuses for hesitancy and failure: the sanctions on Iraq, Israeli obstacles on exports to Palestine and the drop in the prices of oil affecting exports to the Gulf. In other words, said Faneek, the government wants to blame failure on uncontrollable external circumstances. However, the statement drew a realistic picture of the current economic situation: a 17.6 per cent increase in internal debt, a 5.3 per cent increase in external debt, 1.2 per cent in local proceeds growth, a 5.0 per cent rise in the cost of living, a 9.6 per cent budget deficit while capital reserves of hard currencies dropped to \$1.2 billion. The announcement, which warned against failing to achieve 1999 economic objectives, forms a model for governmental policies in stating facts that sometimes are "bitter" without promoting false hopes, he concluded.

Al Ra'i's Raja Elissa discussed the Israeli security issue, quoting President Clinton as saying, when he arrived in Tel Aviv, that the most important thing is to maintain Israel's security in the region. Firstly, if Israel fears bombs on its streets, then it has to stop its aggressive actions against Arabs, who have learned to react similarly. Secondly, Arabs learned violence from Israelis, especially after the Deir Yassin massacre and what followed. Thirdly, the Israeli external security is protected thanks to its nuclear and chemical weapons and the recent U.S. Patriot missiles. What does Israel want after all that, asked Elissa and called for Israelis to stop misleading Americans and Arabs.

# Slowly leaving behind the 19th Century

## View from the Fourth Circle



Rami G. Khouri

and Israeli peoples to live, work, and move freely in any part of Palestine and Israel, without prejudice to the sovereign rights or laws of either side".

5. The continuing domestic Israeli discrediting of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as a political deceit master and a walking moral vacuum is taking place at a fast pace. There is a growing sense in Israel that Netanyahu-style scare tactics, exploiting real human fears, and aggressive negativism are both a political and a moral failure for the Jewish people. Press advertisements here this week by hardline Israeli and American Jewish groups (such as Women in Green) desperately seek to stop the historical inevitability of the birth of the state of Palestine alongside Israel; these groups even exploit Jewish history to

appeal emotionally to Israelis today, including using stories from the biblical Books of Maccabees. The fact is, such transparently desperate attempts only turn the truly heroic in Jewish history into the pitiful, the epic into the comic, and the noble into the shameless.

These are separate milestones along that slow, steady road towards an Arab-Israeli sustainable peace, each reflecting the growing common recognition of the need to keep moving towards accepting principles of equality and mutual justice. The significant historical barrier we are passing through — slowly, slowly — in Arab-Israeli peace-making is not the start of the 21st century, but the end of the 19th century. We are, and must keep, moving towards a free and independent Palestinian state alongside the Israeli state, a just resolution of the Palestine refugee problem, the sharing of Jerusalem as the undivided capital of Palestinian and Israeli states, a just resolution of legitimate Jewish claims, and security and acceptance for all. These factors will collectively mark our final, common exit from the 19th Century's mutually demeaning colonial and imperial horrors — whether practised by others in the past against us separately, or practised by ourselves against one another in the modern era.

# The danger of inflating U.S.-Palestinian relations

By Fawaz A. Gerges

A FEW YEARS ago, it would have seemed unlikely that the president of the United States would travel to Palestine to address the Palestinian National Council, the de facto parliament, in Gaza. A few years ago, few analysts would have thought the unthinkable about America being a just step away from recognising Palestinian statehood. A few years ago, few would have calculated that the United States would pledge \$900 million in aid to the Palestinians to assist them in reconstructing their economy and society, and it would press other wealthy nations to contribute billions of dollars in the same cause. The Clinton administration, one of the most pro-Israeli U.S. administrations, is doing just that.

In the last few weeks, Clinton brokered the land-for-peace deal between Israel and the Palestinians at Wye River, that forced Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to put his promises in writing, thus tying his own hands by granting the American government the status of arbiter. In late November, the Clinton administration sponsored a one-day international donors' conference in Washington that raised more than \$2.3 billion in aid pledges to the PNA. President Clinton's visit to Gaza represents yet another example of America's gradual recognition of a Palestinian statehood. As the New York Times, one of the leading newspapers in the United States, put it, Clinton's trip "signals a profound change in the dynamic between the Americans, the Israelis and the Palestinians." Israeli Haaretz newspaper sounded more alarmed than its U.S. counterpart: "The problem is not that Clinton and Arafat are developing mutual trust, but that the Americans are getting closer to the Palestinians while they are moving further away from Israel." Are we witnessing a dramatic shift in U.S.-Palestinian relations, or do the steps taken by the Clinton administration represent symbolic, not concrete, gestures? What is the status of the U.S.-Israeli special relationship? What does explain the current tensions between Washington and Tel Aviv? How do American officials perceive the Likud government and its leader, Netanyahu? Has the U.S. bureaucracy come to terms with the need of establishing a Palestinian state? And to what extent should the Palestinian leadership have faith in Washington's ability to press Israel to make concessions on the peace process?

Observers in the United States and Israel are impressed by the degree to which U.S.-Palestinian relations have evolved in the last few years. In contrast to past behaviour, American officials now seem comfortable discussing with their Palestinian counterparts a wide variety of issues, ranging from economic and technical cooperation to political and security matters. It is true the United States has pledged no more than \$900 million in aid to the Palestinians over the next five years, while the Israelis are expected to seek up to \$1.2 billion in additional U.S. aid just as a result of the Wye agreement. However, U.S. senior officials, including the president himself, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and Secretary of Commerce William M. Daley have lobbied hard in European states and Gulf countries and successfully solicited contributions worth billions of dollars for the Palestinians. Unlike the previous Labour government, the Likud coalition has expressed its unhappiness with this forthcoming and active U.S. approach toward assisting the PNA. To show its displeasure, the Israeli government did not send its foreign minister, Ariel Sharon, to attend the international donors' conference that was held in Washington at the end of November. Instead, the Israeli team was led by the director general of the foreign ministry, Eytan Benzur.

President Clinton and some of his senior

aides have stressed the need to help President Yasser Arafat and his Palestinian National Authority (PNA) withstand domestic political pressure from the forces that are opposed to the current peace process, particularly Hamas. The Americans correctly believe that there is a causal link between deteriorating economic conditions and revolutionary currents. In the case of the Palestinians, the peace process has brought about little improvement in the economic well-being of average citizens. On the contrary, unemployment has skyrocketed to almost 60 per cent; and so has inflation. Americans appreciate this painful fact and recognise Israel's role in exacerbating the Palestinian predicament through their frequent closure of borders, thus keeping Palestinian workers and goods from reaching Israel.

More than once, Clinton referred to the suffering of the Palestinians and called for improvement in their well-being. The U.S. administration appears to be sensitive to humanitarian issues as they affect and impact Palestinian politics and economics.

American officials are also nervous about the gradual weakening of Arafat's authority and the strengthening of Hamas and the radical camp. This point, more than anything else, might explain the efforts of the Clinton administration to shore up support for Arafat by providing him with financial and technical assistance and treating him like a statesman. Clinton administration aides fear that the erosion of Palestinian popular support for Arafat would translate into tangible assets for Hamas.

Blinded by ideology, Likud politicians are irked because of the positive reception that Arafat receives from Clinton administration officials. It was reported that President Clinton became outraged by the undignified way that Netanyahu treated Arafat during the Wye negotiations. At one point, Clinton left the room, feeling "disgusted" by Netanyahu's aggressive style. Throughout the negotiations, unlike his Israeli counterpart, Arafat acted like a statesman and never lost his temper or posture.

Indeed, at the heart of the apparent improvement in U.S.-Palestinian relations lies the suspicion and doubt that the Clinton administration harbours toward Netanyahu. It is an understatement to note that Clinton and his senior aides do not like Netanyahu. At best and despite false appearances, the relationship between Clinton and Netanyahu has been strained, sometime bordering on hostility. While Clinton developed a close personal rapport with the former Israeli prime ministers Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres, he mistrusts and resents Netanyahu for allying himself with Clinton's political opponents — the Republicans and the religious right in the United States. Netanyahu has challenged U.S. Middle East policy by repeatedly opposing Clinton's initiatives on the Israeli-Palestinian peace track. On several occasions, the Clinton administration threatened Netanyahu with punitive actions unless he reconsidered his opposition to the Oslo peace accords. Netanyahu called U.S. officials' bluff by reiterating his rejection of various American proposals. The Likud hardliner undermined Clinton's credibility by making him appear weak and indecisive.

In contrast, Arafat has been pliant and accommodating. He has accepted almost whatever proposals the Americans have pre-

sented him. The PNA has also been receptive to Washington's and Israel's wishes to crack down on Islamist and leftist activists who are opposed to the peace process. For example, hundreds of Palestinian activists are in Arafat's prisons. Arafat and his lieutenants have also cooperated with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) on various security issues. On the peace process, in Wye, U.S. officials were pleasantly surprised to get Arafat's acquiescence and consent, and they did not have to do any arm twisting. In this context, the Palestinian negotiating team made itself totally dependent on the Americans. Despite Arafat's major concessions in Wye, however, Netanyahu and his Likud partners gave the American mediators a terribly hard time, and they came very close to torpedoing the negotiations. For all these reasons, U.S. officials have developed some empathy toward the Palestinians, and they have decided to support Arafat, who has taken some major risks in the pursuit of peace-making.

**'One should be careful not to confuse tactics with strategy. Clinton's dislike of Netanyahu does not translate into any concrete actions against Israel'**

Since Netanyahu came to power in 1996, U.S.-Israeli relations have been tense and uneasy. This tension has much more to do with Netanyahu's undiplomatic confrontational style than with any dramatic or structural shift in Washington's strategic commitment to Israel. Israeli commentators are correct in their assessment that the current coolness and chill in U.S.-Israeli relations reflects poorly on Netanyahu's diplomatic skills, at a cost to Israel. But it is an exaggeration to argue, as some Israeli and U.S. observers have done, that Israel risks losing its special relationship with the United States, or that the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) could someday be on a diplomatic par with Israel. This is far from the truth.

The Israeli-U.S. intimate relationship is solid rock. Clinton has proved to be more sensitive to domestic politics than any previous U.S. president and the "most pro-Israel" in the history of this country. Among Israelis, the new catch phrase is that Clinton is "being more pro-Israel than necessary." Clinton has refrained from exerting any serious pressure on Netanyahu to get him to accept U.S. peace proposals that are very favourable to Israel. The Clinton administration has also been reluctant to publicise its own initiatives so as not to embarrass and antagonise the Likud government. On balance, the agreement reached in Wye reflects more of Israel's interests and concerns than those of the Palestinians. While Clinton and his senior aides loathe Netanyahu, they are fully committed to maintaining Israel's strategic superiority over all of its Arab neighbours.

The Clinton administration has given more material and political support to Israel than any other U.S. administration. For example, although the Americans pledged \$400 million in aid to the Palestinians after signing the Wye memorandum, they seemed to promise \$1.2 billion in additional aid to Israel. During an interview with Israeli television, Clinton brushed aside concerns that his visit to Gaza might be seen as a step toward American recognition of a Palestinian statehood: "That is not what I'm doing in going there. I have tried strictly to adhere to the position of the United States that we would not take a position on any final status issue." Clinton also said that he was travelling to Gaza at the recommendation of Netanyahu: "The prime minister wanted me to go there and wanted

us all to make this pitch," he said, adding that he would ask the Palestinian National Council (PNC) "to support the peace and to renounce the idea of animosity toward an opposition to the existence of the state of Israel, and instead embrace the path not only of peace but of cooperation." Other U.S. officials have also made the same point regarding Clinton's visit.

When Netanyahu's chief spokesman, David Bar-Ilan, formally asked Clinton not to arrive in Gaza in his big baby-blue Boeing 747, with its huge seal of the United States, the Americans quickly acceded to Israel's request and decided to use a helicopter instead. Similarly, when Israel suggested a presidential visit to Masada, a scene of Jewish military sacrifice in biblical times, to balance Gaza, the Americans agreed. Nevertheless, the Israeli government is a reluctant host. Asked about Clinton's trip, Netanyahu said, shrugging: "If he wants to come, he should come. If he does not want to come, he should not come." Netanyahu's response is hardly welcoming. Other Likud officials explicitly and rudely opposed the visit. Netanyahu made a terrible blunder in Wye by asking Clinton to visit Gaza and witness a vote by the PNC to nullify language in the Palestinian Charter that calls for Israel's destruction. The Likud hard-liner now seemed to have changed his mind.

However, one should be careful not to confuse tactics with strategy. Clinton's dislike of Netanyahu does not translate into any concrete actions against Israel.

Nevertheless, Clinton's visit to Gaza, coupled with other U.S. steps in support of Arafat, represents an important symbolic change in Washington attitudes toward the likelihood of a Palestinian statehood. This shift is critical given the fact that until the late 1980s the United States classified the PLO as a terrorist group, and it refrained from holding any official contacts with PLO members. Even today, the U.S. Congress still considers the PLO a terrorist organisation.

The Palestinians have done relatively well in trying to seek international support for their legitimate cause. They have made big inroads in the United States itself. This fact should not blind Arafat and his aides to thinking that the United States would ever compromise Israel's interests for the sake of Palestine's. The opposite is likely to be true. Palestinians' dependence on America should be informed by the realities of the U.S.-Israeli special relationship and the huge imbalance of power between Israel and the Palestinians.

In addition to seeking multilateral international support to achieve just peace, the Palestinian leadership should concentrate on constructing and consolidating rational and effective institutions that are open and inclusive. Arafat and his aides should think twice before trampling on the rule of law and violating the legal and civic rights of their citizens. A strong and stable civil society, coupled with rational institutions, represents the most important building block and bargaining chip in the hands of Palestinian leaders in their struggle to achieve self determination. The fear is that Arafat might be tempted to sacrifice legality and internal harmony on the altar of a new relationship with the only superpower in the world today.

The writer holds the Christian A. Johnson Chair in International Affairs and Middle Eastern studies at Sarah Lawrence College in New York. His most recent book is entitled *America and Political Islam: Clash of Cultures or Clash of Interests?* (Published in Arabic by Dar Al-Nahar, Beirut and in English by Cambridge University Press).



# The teenager who turned politics into art

By Simon Hattenstone

SAMIRA MAKHMALBAF skips down the street, swinging her bag in the wind, cocky as a ferret. I tell her how much I like her first film, *The Apple*. "Why?" She stops and stares at me, aggressively. I haven't a clue what to say. "See, people interview me, and expect me to answer things so profoundly even though I'm only 18 and a half. And I ask you a simple question, and you can't answer it."

It's funny, I have a picture of Samira in my head. She is wearing a full-length black dress and veil, and looking as Iranian as a fatwa. But the Samira berating me is all jeans, V-necked top and teenage acne. After much inept burling I find myself defending her film at turgid length. Actually, there's no need. *The Apple* is as wonderful as it is strange.

In Britain, it would probably be classed as a documentary, possibly a docu-drama. But in Iran it's definitely a movie. It tells the true story of a man — married to a seemingly deranged, blind woman — who has locked up his twin daughters for all their 12 years. He's not an evil man. He believes it is the only way he can look after his daughters. The film takes up the story after it has been reported on television — Samira arrives with a crew and films the girls' rehabilitation in the outside world. Not only does she film it, she orchestrates it. We see the father presented with a newspaper calling for his imprisonment, we see the savage-like girls normalised over the course of 11 days. By the end of the film they are playfully revelling in their new freedoms. In short, we witness a miracle, though it could have just as easily turned into the cruellest of exploitation movies.

Samira is the daughter of Mohsen Makhmalf, the celebrated filmmaker who edited and scripted *The Apple*. He has been a public figure in Iran for more than 20 years. Newspapers refer to him as an Islamicist who spent some time in prison during the Shah's reign. When he was released he began to make films and now his children are involved in the family business. Samira's sister, Hanna, has just made a short. The film *My Aunt Was Ill*. She is eight years old.

We are sitting in a restaurant talking about getting old. Samira says it is an eternity since she made the film that it is impossible to compare her experiences of a 17-year-old with that of a fully-fledged 18-and-a-half-year-old. Since then she has been around the world, witnessed how people live in different societies, discovered that the daily patchwork of sickness and light, despair and joy, is much alike in Iran and Europe and America.

She says that is what she likes about *The Apple*, the fact that it reflects the messiness of daily existence without trying to resolve it. "I don't judge in it, and I can just see different people's reasons for doing what they've done. I can go into a dark heart, a sad situation, and finding a little brightness and happiness. Even in a war situation, you can find some happiness, some brightness."

Has she experienced much darkness? "Uhuh, yes." Such as? She says it's a funny question, and pauses. "Losing your mother is not easy." Reluctantly, Samira tells me her mother was 32 when she died six years ago. What did she die of? "No cancer. She just died. But still life has continued. So there is a hard and dark situation, but why shouldn't I

still be able to find happiness? All I need is a small piece of light."

Samira talks in metaphors, colours, abstracts. She learned English at school, but never well enough to speak it. When she found out a few months ago she would be visiting Europe to promote the film, she spent a few weeks learning it properly. "I thought I'd like to say something for myself. This is a film about communication, so it's good if you can communicate a little bit." Without being able to communicate, she says, you cannot be a complete human being. "At the beginning of the film these two girls look like animals. Why? They are not retarded. They just can't communicate. It could be you or me in their situation." The problem is more severe for women, she says. "Men are in a good situation because they work. Less women work than men. You can see it everywhere, but Iran is an extreme."

She says behaviour is rooted in culture and tradition. Even the most perverse behaviour. If you look in the Koran you will find a reason for the father to behave as he did. "You see in the book what is written, it says girls are like flowers — exposed in front of the sunshine they will wilt. It's so beautiful, it's poetry. And it is a bad thing that these bad things are written in such a poetic way because you believe they must be right."

So his behaviour is rooted in the country's politics? "Noooooooh!" she squeals, and I expect her to start stamping her foot. Samira's views, when she allows them free rein, are fascinating, but mention politics and she snaps shut. Earlier this year I interviewed the Iranian director Abbas Kiarostami. Likewise he held forth on culture and tradition, but hinted that it was difficult for him to make films. He started talking in agitated tones before asserting that he has been treated with generosity by the Iranian government.

Yet it is public knowledge that Iranian films are censored, and that the directors who get their films made have to tread a delicate, elliptical line. What is less well known is that the films emerging from Iran are the finest in the world. And, difficult though it is to admit it, censorship has probably helped. For much of the nineties we saw a similar phenomenon in China, which produced parables of unequalled beauty. Films such as *Raise the Red Lantern* and *Ju Dou* were rooted in seemingly simple stories about patriarchy set in prerevolutionary times — because that was a world relatively safe from the censors.

And now Iran is reinventing cine-

ma to help him kill himself (A Taste Of Cherry), a boy enjoys running (The Runner), a woman makes a carpet while waiting for her lover (Gabbah).

It feels like real life is being played out, possibly slowed down, for our benefit. And to an extent it is. Iranian directors film real people, often children, simply being — sometimes scripted, sometimes not. In films like *Close-Up*, Kiarostami recreates a real situation using the people involved. Here, a man impersonates a film maker and wheedles his way into a moneyed family by suggesting he wants to use them in a movie — the impersonated film-maker just happens to be Mohsen Makhmalf.

The worlds of truth and fiction are melded so closely that it is impossible to separate them. Although the films look like documentaries, they manipulate us like movies. It is a cinema of imagery and captured moments — an elderly man catches the sun in his hand a young boy cycles into the distance with a smile on his face that no director could order, an apple dangles above the head of a blind woman, taunting and tempting her. The images stay with us, gnaw away at us, even though we may not know why.

These films have been criticised in the West for being apolitical. And, of course, the intention is for them to appear apolitical to the Iranian government. We are simply making a documentary, they tell the censor; nothing to worry about. They present a sparse script (maybe 15 pages compared to a minimum of 90 in Hollywood) about a dullish subject and the censor waves them on their way. Yet they are political in the profoundest sense — in reflecting everyday lives, we learn about the women who, hidden behind the veils, are banished from the social world, and the children left skinny and illiterate by poverty.

In its own way, *The Apple* could not be more political — a damning indictment of what happens when you take the Koran literally. Did Samira find it easy to make the film? She says she was lucky. She didn't need to censor herself, and that anyway under President Khatami things have eased up. Today, she says, most censorship is not imposed by government because of the ideas but by producers because of the money.

Does that mean she could criticise the government? "Why do you ask these questions of me?" she screams. "Why are you asking all this politics?" She is getting louder and louder. "I'm not interested in politics. I'm an artist. You ask these political things — I don't have the experience to answer you. I'm just interested in art and cinema. I said there is kind of censorship, I said it's getting better. I said I've been lucky, so what else? There is nothing more. I don't know any more. I'm only 18 and a half."

Samir Makhmalf is petulant, at times obnoxious, but she is phenomenally bright. And never more so than when throwing one of her many wobbles. She made her first movie appearance as a six-month-old in one of her father's films. When did she become interested in movies? "Do I have to say exactly the age? I could understand it when I was four years-old. I was already involved in the process of making films because my father was all the time making films. And he was always talking about his subject to my mother, so I'd see how he found a film from a very little idea."

She says she never saw non-Iranian films, and she didn't see that many Iranian ones, because her father was



Massoumeh and Zahra, the wild girls of *The Apple* (file photo)

an ascetic who wouldn't allow a video in the house.

At 15 Samira left school, just six months before she was due to get her diploma. She was bright, one of the smartest in her class, when she turned round to her father and said she'd had enough, she wasn't learning enough, and now she wanted to make movies. "Because we were girls we were a second class of human being... being a director you need to be a first class of human being." Was she as belligerent at school as she is now? She turns to her translator, she chat away at length and she giggles. "Nooooooooh, I was fine. I was a good student."

Her father and the teachers tried to persuade her to stay, to no avail. "Sometimes I do things that are a little bit unusual, but they don't damage anybody. If I decide not to go to school and do't bother anybody, what's wrong?" Samira told her father that if he took five minutes of his time to tell her about film-making she wouldn't bother him again. "I said I will leave you for six months and not come back, and he just laughed at me. But little by little he started talking to me about cinema. More than five minutes, maybe one hour, two hours, three hours. And then some of my friends wanted to know about art, so they came to these sessions and then some of my father's friends who were artists came, and we had discussions. Discussions, is that right? So after a few times it was like a private art school. We learnt about painting and books and film."

Kiarostami told me he thought cinema was respected more in Iran than in many countries, that both audience and directors were more interested in finding a truth than evading it with escapism. Samira gives me one of her sceptical looks. I sense she wants to tell me that's rubbish, but is holding back. Eventually, she answers with unusual tact. "He's a wonderful director... everything that anyone says is true... but still there are people who go for entertainment. People everywhere are the same. How can Iran be quite different?"

And having paid her dues to Kiarostami she concentrates on kicking my opinion into touch. She says

that of the 70 films a year made in Iran, most are Hollywood-like in their banality. "Very simple, very ignorant. OK, there may not be sex or violence like in American, but it would be an adventure. There would be a simple good guy, a simple bad guy. They find no interest in the characters, just judge."

Before I met Samira I presumed that her father must have been the creative force behind *The Apple*. And certainly he had a considerable role, but when you hear her speak it becomes apparent that the film is very much her vision. Yet, however, brilliant it is, I still feel uneasy about *The Apple*.

How is the film scripted? "The family use their own words. I never dictate to them. I knew what the reactions to certain things would be. I knew if I gave the father the newspaper he would be angry when it said he is guilty." She explains that the script isn't a script as such — it is the events created around the people.

Is there a danger in playing God like this? "OK, so what am I to do, I'm to leave them in the house? I think the film made them more socialised. You see in 11 days how their lives have been changed. If they'd stayed at home for 11 days their lives would not have changed so much." It's impossible to disagree with her. She says she is still in touch with the family, and the two girls have now settled into school.

Samira leaves to have her photograph taken and I ask the translator why she is so defensive about politics. He asks me if I know about her father. "Makhmalf was a religious fanatic, a fundamentalist," he says. When Makhmalf was about 20 years old he was an Islamic revolutionary who stabbed a policeman in an attempt to disarm him. Makhmalf was on death row, had his sentence commuted to 25 years, and was eventually released when the Shah's regime was brought down. The translator asks me if I've seen Makhmalf's film, *A Moment Of Innocence*, in which he recaptures this time and turns it into a movie — this, he says, is the director recanting his revolutionary years.

A few days later I see the film and everything begins to make sense. Makhmalf plays himself, as does

the policeman he stabbed, just as the family in *The Apple* play themselves. It is a lyrical, humanist film. At the end, when the young Makhmalf goes to re-enact the stabbing, he finds this time he cannot do it, he wants a different means of changing the world.

When Makhmalf emerged from prison he became a propagandist film-maker for Ayatollah Khomeini and the revolution. Then he began to read the philosophers and gradually turned into a poet of the cinema rather than an austere dogmatist. Some say he is no longer even an Islamicist. No wonder Samira is touchy about politics.

Does the translator know how her mother died? He says she burned to death in the house, and though it was probably an accident there was inevitably much conjecture in Iran.

Samira returns and stares hard — perhaps she heard us talking about her mother. I ask her whether she is making another film? She says she's thinking about it, but she's not telling me what it's about, nah-nah-nah-nah-na, and she giggles.

Would she ever live outside Iran? "No, never." Would she make a film outside Iran? "I don't think so because I know my culture." But then again, she says, when she went to the U.S. she was amazed by the similarity in the details of their lives.

I tell her how surprised I am that Iranian films are so secular. She asks what secular means before laying into my bigotry. "Aha, yes. It is your problem that you don't know Iran well. It is the ignorance of the human race who say Iran is a place where no one lives well, but we are living our lives... it was my ignorance before going to the United States and Europe, and then I find we're all human. It is good we are the same."

Samira is chatting away when, without warning, the photographer takes a picture. "No, you can't," she says. And suddenly the strident Samira Makhmalf is all of a panic. "No you can't take pictures, not yet." She reaches into her bag and draws out a black scarf and wraps it round her head. "Now, you can take them now. You see, I still have films I need to make in Iran."

— The Guardian

## PNC abolishes anti-Israeli clauses from charter

(Continued from page 1)

Arafat told Clinton: "We affirm to you that our people support a just peace and will not return to a pre-peace era and we will not be easy with anyone who harms the security of either side."

"I reaffirm to you what I told you at the White House, that we will continue the peace process away from violence and confrontation," Arafat said.

He included in his speech a condemnation of Israeli settlement activity in Arab east Jerusalem and in the West Bank and Gaza. He also deplored the continued detention of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails.

"We want our sons to return to their homes," he said.

A trilateral summit gathering Arafat, Netanyahu and Clinton which was set to take place late last night was delayed until today. Israeli television said Netanyahu had demanded a delay in the summit because he was not ready on the issue of the release of Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails.

No major breakthrough is expected at this summit. Although Palestinian officials said on Monday they would not accept a postponement of the upcoming withdrawal, it is believed that a compromise will be reached, and the pullback will take place in about two weeks.

On Monday, Netanyahu faces a tough challenge to his crumbling coalition in parliament when a bill call-

ing for early elections comes up for a vote.

Hard-liners in Netanyahu's coalition have threatened to vote in favour of spring elections if Netanyahu carries out a troop pullback. If they make good on their word, the bill will pass. Netanyahu portrayed Monday's PNC vote as a personal achievement.

"It was achieved today and it was achieved first and foremost because we insisted that the charter be cancelled," he told a news conference.

"It is a very important step," Netanyahu said of the PNC vote. "I welcome it. It's a positive step, but it needs to be recognised as one step. Other steps are necessary."

## Iran 4th Exhibition (Amman)

Location:

Jordan Sports Federation for the Handicapped (Behind Sports City Complex)



The Hashemite Association for International Economic Cooperation



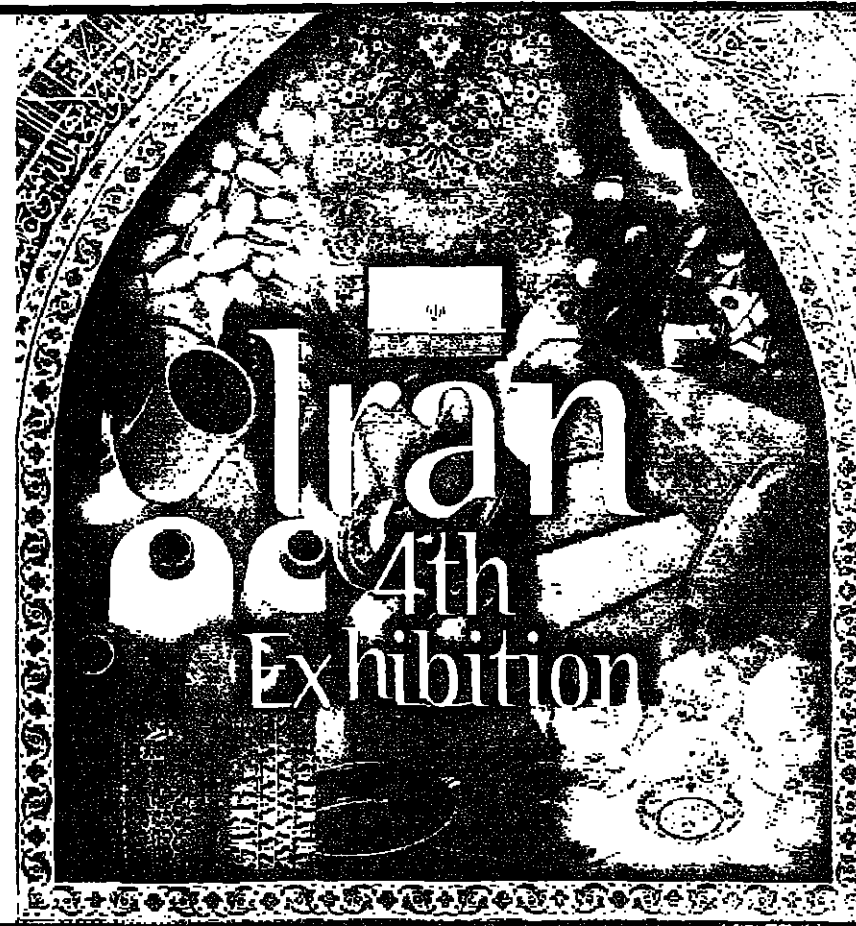
The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran

12-18/12/1998  
from 11:00am - 10:00pm

Exhibited Items For Sale

IDROEXPO

الجمعية الاقتصادية الإيرانية الشريفة





## Decision to lift cash subsidies on bread to be reviewed end of '99

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A decision to lift quarterly cash subsidies on bread and fix local market prices for the coming year will be up for review at the end of 1999, a senior official said Monday.

Minister of Information Naser Judeh said "the decision will be evaluated at the end of this year and will consider the benefit [of the removal of the cash payment] to the public and to the budget in accordance with international prices."

In its budget proposal submitted to Parliament last Wednesday, the government disclosed its intention to reduce bread prices and simultaneously remove the quarterly cash subsidies programme: a decision that will be effective as of the beginning of the Holy Month of Ramadan, expected to begin on Dec. 19 or 20. Families dependent on benefits from the National Aid Fund will be exempted.

Bread prices — set at 200 fils per kilogramme following the 1996 decision to raise the national price of bread from 85 fils per kilogramme — will drop to 150 fils per kilogramme, offsetting, to an extent, the removal of the cash subsidy.

IMF reforms have required that the govern-

ment do away with the bread subsidy, which in 1995 sent the deficit spiralling after the global price of wheat shot up and which cost the government JD105 million to maintain the subsidy. But the severe political backlash created by the rise in bread prices in 1996 have made successive governments reluctant to make further subsidy cuts.

This year, world wheat prices swooped to a nearly all-time low, providing the government room to contemplate further revisions to subsidies. The proposed budget allocation to maintaining the remaining price difference — 175 fils on international markets compared to 150 fils at home — also is much pared down, standing now at JD15 million.

Senior economists Monday gave varying views of the government's decision, both of which took into consideration the price of wheat on the international market.

"I think it's a step in the right direction," economist and columnist Fahed Faneh told the Jordan Times. "If world wheat prices continue to drop, the government could conceivably withdraw from subsidies altogether, which they have to do sooner or later."

The middle class will lose most with the removal of the cash payment, he said.

since the reduction in price does not equate the direct cash payment which does out roughly 90 fils per kilogramme.

"If the government cannot totally withdraw, this should at least help reduce its expenditure on subsidies," he said. "The options remain after a year to either float prices, if the world wheat prices do not experience a dramatic change, and allow the price to fluctuate in accordance with the market. Alternatively, they can again fix a price that reflects the global market."

However, a second economist, who requested anonymity, called the government's decision a gamble.

"If the price rises within the year, the government will have the choice of either paying more or increasing the local price to compensate for the change in the global market," the economist said. "If the world price rises due to a freeze or disease, we can find ourselves in very big trouble, especially if we decide to raise the local price."

"The distribution and lasting effects of sudden poverty are shocking," he added. "And it takes time for policy makers to be aware of this and longer to act, which means those most affected can wait up to a year for relief."

A future alternative he said, is to implement a subsidies index by which subsidies regularly undergo a corresponding adjustment that reflects fluctuations in world wheat prices.

"This shows people that the government is with them," he said.

## Lebanon will privatise to cut debt

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanon's new government will use the proceeds of privatising state holdings to reduce the country's public debt sharply over the next four years, Economy Minister Nasser Saidi said Monday.

"Privatisation is there to address the public debt issue," Saidi, the former senior vice governor of the central bank, told Reuters in an interview. "The intention is to use any privatisation proceeds to reduce the level of the debt."

Saidi, who is presiding over a much strengthened ministry that includes the former ministries of economy, trade and industry, spoke to Reuters following release of the new government's policy outline in parliament.

Saidi said no decisions had been made on which state assets would be sold, but he foresaw substantial sales over a three-to-four-year period to cut a debt now estimated at 110 per cent of annual gross domestic product (GDP).

"I think the target would be to reach over the medium term a debt to GDP ratio around 80 to 85 per cent," he said in the office he took over last week.

The new government headed by Prime Minister Selim Al Hoss is dominated by technocrats like Saidi and has made cutting the budget deficit and public debt inherited from the previous administration of Rafik Al Hariri its top priority.

"Privatisation can play an important role because it means the private sector can start providing infrastructure services," Saidi said. "As they do so, it also means improving the growth rate of the private sector and attracting capital flows."

Saidi said the new government, formed only a week ago, would take up to two months to present a budget for 1999 and needed more precise figures on the state of government finances.

The new minister said he intended to ensure the bureaucracy starts producing more accurate and timely statistics — the GDP figure itself involves a lot of guess work.

He said the government wanted to establish the precise level of public debt after reports the previous administration had postponed payment of some bills to meet its deficit target. This year's target was a formidable 42 per cent of expenditures, an improvement from 1997's deficit of 59 per cent of spending.

The Hariri government had avoided the politically sensitive issue of privatisation, focusing on massive rebuilding from the 1975-90 civil war. The new government appears ready to tackle issues where Hariri faced tough political opposition, but Saidi said privatisation needs preparation.

"What is most important for us at this stage is to get the principal admitted. Privatisation needs popular support," he said when asked about specific state holdings. Electricity and telecommunications have been mentioned among possible candidates.

"It should provide transparency, it should be democratic in the sense that we want to have as wide as possible sections of Lebanese (people) participating in privatisation," he said.

He added that could involve giving workers in privatised holdings a share in the new company, special allocations to the public using the services and a golden share for the state to protect the public interest.

"And finally, the rest would be open for a public offering on the stock exchange, which would enhance the stock exchange as well," said Saidi, underlining his desire to draw more private capital into the renewal of Lebanon.

Hoss outlined an inaugural reform programme to parliament on Monday that focused on controlling Lebanon's debts and making the country attractive to investors.

"Our primary challenge is to stop the financial bleeding that resulted from previous policies, the reconstruction process and the slow pace of administrative reforms," Hoss, sworn in earlier this month, told the 128-member parliament.

Hoss, a veteran politician and economist, said austerity measures and privatisation were among the options his 16-member cabinet was asking parliament to endorse.

Deputies plan to debate Hoss's programme for 48 hours before holding a vote of confidence, which the new government is expected to win easily.

"We are facing two challenges: the first is tackling the budget deficit and the public debt. The second is to regain the competitiveness and develop a real investment environment that will attract Lebanese and other savings and channel them into productive and service fields," Hoss said.

law to ease funding for machinery and equipment.

"The current lack of medium and long-term funding and the centralising of loans hampers development of productive and investment sectors," he said.

The government is keen to maintain monetary stability and will "coordinate" with the bank sector and financial markets to attract foreign capital, he said.

Transparency was the key to solving Lebanon's heavy public debt, he said, revealing that the government had initiated a study to find the "real" size of the public debt.

It reached \$16.63 billion by the end of October

according to the central bank but Hoss on Saturday estimated the debt would be \$18 billion by the end of 1998.

The new government inherited a budget deficit which ballooned during the six-year reign of Hariri. His administration focused on reconstruction after the 15-year civil war, largely ignoring financial and reform issues the current government intends to emphasise.

The budget deficit, forecast at 42 per cent of expenditure in 1998, is closely watched by foreign investors and rating agencies. The deficit reached 59 per cent of expenditure in 1997.

### Exchange Rates

Monday, 14-12-98

ACCESS 4646868

ACCESS 4845858

CURRENCY	UNIT	JO	US	EURO	GBP	CHF	JPY	AUD	NZD	HKD	SAR	TRY	INR	THB	SGD	MYR	PHP	IDR	USD
JORDAN DINAR	1,000	0.1887	0.1927	1.8778	1.8390	0.1844	2.3468	0.2077	0.7080										
BAHAI DINAR	1,000	0.1887	0.1927	1.8778	1.8390	0.1844	2.3468	0.2077	0.7080										
QATAR RYAL	1,000	0.1887	0.1927	1.8778	1.8390	0.1844	2.3468	0.2077	0.7080										
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## Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

### Cement company stops exports to Syria and shifts focus to Palestinian territories

**\*\* CEMENT EXPORTS** dropped by around 40 per cent this year as the volume was less than 500,000 tonnes of cement and clinker compared to about 800,000 tonnes during 1997. Jordan Cement Factories Company Ltd. (JCFC) General Manager Taleb Rifai said this week. He attributed the drop to the halt of exports to the Syrian market which alone was absorbing 400,000 tonnes of Jordanian cement each year. "The demand for cement was low in Syria," he said to explain the reason for stopping sales to Jordan's northern neighbour.

Rifai indicated that the company will try to compensate the loss by exporting cement and clinker to the Palestinian territories. "During 1999, exports to the West Bank will total about half a million tonnes," he said noting that the company was not able to reach this mark in 1998 because of procedural hindrances, closures and border complexities. The general manager pointed out that exports to the Palestinian territories did not exceed 220,000 tonnes while the remaining amount was exported to Egypt, Yemen, Sudan and Eritrea.

Noting that total sales will not exceed three million tonnes, Rifai indicated that approximately 2.3 million tonnes go for local consumption. He said the company will face major challenges in the coming stage especially when the concession agreement signed with the government expires in the year 2001. "As all indicators show there is no intention to renew the concession, the JCFC will be facing foreign competition and even local competition as some other local companies may emerge in the same field," Rifai explained.

According to Rifai, the biggest problem from which the company suffers is the high cost of energy and electricity due to the usage of

the fuel oil which is an expensive type of energy. He said the JCFC is currently searching for alternative cheaper sources of energy and that oil shale, which is abundant in the Kingdom, could be one of the alternatives.

With regard to the French Lafarge company, which recently bought a 33 per cent stake in the JCFC, Rifai said the foreign investor will help lifting the competitiveness of the cement company through dealing with advanced technological knowhow. "This will help reduce costs by seeking new alternative sources of energy," he stressed. The general manager emphasised in this context that the JCFC will enter a new stage in operations, production and utilisation of advanced technology.

"The coming three years will witness major changes in this direction," he indicated saying that at the present stage relations between Lafarge and the JCFC are being arranged to determine how the new partner could employ its expertise and capabilities to the benefit of the company. Rifai spoke highly of the French investor by pointing out that Lafarge owns more than 60 cement plants around the world and that it has conducted a number of studies on all cement companies in the region.

Rifai concluded that the general accord with Lafarge cover developing human resources, raising production efficiency and reducing costs either through lowering energy bills, cutting purchase costs, raising the efficiency of stocking and supplies or any other measure to lower costs without affecting the quality (Al Dustour).

A.F.M TRADE Monday, 14-12-98  
ACCESS 4648868

Company	Open	Close	Change
<b>BANKS</b>			
ARAB BK	215.000	216.000	+0.47%
NTL BK	1.560	1.600	+2.56%
BA OF JO	1.150	1.210	+5.22%
MOBIL EAST BK	1.050	1.040	-0.95%
THE HOUSING BK	2.710	2.740	+1.11%
JO KUWAIT BK	1.860	1.860	0.00%
JO GULF BK	1.700	1.680	-1.18%
ARAB JO INVEST BK	2.300	2.300	0.00%
JO ISLAMIC BK	1.860	1.860	0.00%
JO INVEST BK	1.450	1.460	+0.69%
PHILADELPHIA BK	0.650	0.650	0.00%
<b>BANKS INDEX</b>	<b>281.630</b>	<b>point +</b>	<b>+0.60%</b>
<b>INSURANCE</b>			
ARABIAN SEAS INS	0.970	1.020	+5.15%
AL-NISR INS	3.000	2.850	-5.00%
<b>INSURANCE INDEX</b>	<b>122.600</b>	<b>point +</b>	<b>-0.43%</b>
<b>INDUSTRY</b>			
CEMENT	2.910	3.000	+3.09%
PHOSPHATE	1.270	1.330	+4.72%
PETROLEUM REFINERY	10.220	10.230	+0.10%
WORDED MILLS	5.550	5.750	+3.60%
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL	2.600	2.600	0.00%
CERAMIC IND	1.160	1.140	-1.72%
TOBACCO & CIGARET	1.210	1.210	0.00%
ARAB CHEMICAL DETEGE	1.100	1.100	0.00%
RAPI	0.580	0.580	0.00%
DAR AL DAWA	0.500	0.500	0.00%
MOBIL EAST COMPLEX	0.580	0.570	-1.72%
JO STES	0.840	0.830	-1.19%
CHLORINE	1.220	1.240	+1.64%
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	0.410	0.410	0.00%
NTL IND	0.430	0.420	-2.33%
PETRO-CHEMICAL	0.370	0.370	0.00%
CHEMICAL & VEGETABLE	0.540	0.510	-5.56%
ROCKWOOL	0.350	0.340	-2.86%
UNIVERSAL CHEMICAL	1.080	1.110	+2.78%
NTL CABLE	0.700	0.690	-1.43%
SULPHUR-CHEMICALS	0.430	0.420	-2.33%
ARAB CENTER FOR PHAR	1.210	1.220	+0.83%
EL-ZAY	0.580	0.580	0.00%
UNIVERSAL MODERN IND	0.650	0.640	-1.54%
IND. RESOURCES	0.480	0.480	0.00%
NEWCAPLES	0.640	0.630	-1.56%
NTL ALUMINIUM	0.710	0.720	+1.41%
<b>INDUSTRY INDEX</b>	<b>77.420</b>	<b>point +</b>	<b>+1.07%</b>
<b>PARALLEL</b>			
EXPORT BK (75	0.880	0.880	-0.27%
JO. TRADING FACILITIES	0.380	0.380	-2.56%
UNION INVEST CORP	0.710	0.700	-1.41%
AL-ERKAL	0.620	0.610	-1.61%
ADVANCED PHAR	0.600	0.590	-1.67%
AL-SHARG	1.000	0.990	-0.90%
BECKAL APPLIANCES	0.310	0.320	+3.23%
ARAB INVESTORS	0.950	0.900	-5.26%
ARAB INTL TRADE	0.220	0.230	+4.55%
OPTICAL & AUDIO	0.400	0.400	0.00%
HABCO	0.280	0.270	-3.57%
TEXTILE & PLASTIC	0.280	0.270	-3.57%
INDUSTRIAL PHAR (90	0.630	0.620	-1.59%
UNION TOBACCO	2.380	2.410	+1.26%
AL-RAI	0.540	0.540	0.00%
UNITED ENGL IND	0.220	0.220	0.00%
INTL CERAMIC	0.400	0.400	0.00%
INTL TEXTILE MANU	0.220	0.210	-4.55%
LEIT	0.380	0.380	0.00%
PEARL	0.400	0.410	+2.50%
NUTRI DAR	0.730	0.720	-1.37%
<b>GRAND INDEX</b>	<b>169.97</b>	<b>point +</b>	<b>+0.65%</b>

## AMF lends Jordan \$16.8m

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The Arab Monetary Fund (AMF) announced Monday loans of \$48 million to Yemen and \$16.8 million to Jordan to support their programmes of economic reforms.

The loan for Yemen is aimed primarily at setting up a market for treasury bonds, said the Abu Dhabi-based AMF, an arm of the Arab League. The AMF, quoted by the official Emirati

news agency WAM, said the loan for Jordan was to help draw up a legal framework for financial transactions and to train banking personnel.

## Saudi Arabia to launch Internet on Jan. 2

MANAMA (R) — Saudi Arabia plans to extend the Internet to local service providers this week, in another step towards giving the kingdom's 18 million inhabitants local access to the worldwide web, industry officials said Monday.

They said King Abdul Aziz City for Science and Technology (KACST), charged with supervising the net, had successfully tested the service this month.

"Testing of the service started earlier this month. It will be extended to Internet service providers (ISPs) on Dec. 19 for them to test it and prepare for it," a KACST official said.

"The actual launch of the Internet service will begin on Jan. 2," the official told Reuters by telephone from Riyadh.

At present, people living in Saudi Arabia can only access the Internet by making more expensive international calls to ISPs in neighbouring states, like

Bahrain. An official at the Bahrain Telecommunications Co. said the company is currently providing the service to around 2,500 subscribers in the neighbouring kingdom.

Communications officials said KACST would provide each of the 40 eligible ISPs with 130 modem ports in the first half of next year.

The ISPs would be linked to a main server in the technology city. This server would have so-called "firewalls" blocking certain sites deemed inappropriate by authorities in the conservative Muslim kingdom.

"We are requesting around 300 ports, but we have been assigned only 130," ISP project manager at the Damman-based Compulink Information System, Mohammed Ansar, told Reuters.

He said the 130 ports would allow about 2,000 customers to connect to the net through each ISP.

"They (the authorities) have only 5,000 ports available now," he added.

Ansar said a string of mergers among small firms was likely to be triggered by the imminent launch of the Internet in the kingdom. This would allow them to compete with bigger ISPs, including the state-owned Saudi Telecommunications Co, analysts said.

Ansar's company, CIS, was just one firm which had merged, creating a 10 million riyal (\$2.67 million) joint venture.

"We have merged with another company, Commercial Investment and Development Co. Another six companies in Riyadh and Dammam are also expected to merge," Ansar said.

Industry sources said only about 15 of the 40 eligible ISPs were ready to be connected to the worldwide web in the kingdom.

"Small companies which just applied for the service are still not ready," one said.

## LVMH negotiates to buy Yves Saint Laurent from Sanofi

PARIS (AFP) — LVMH, the biggest luxury-products group in the world, is negotiating to buy the fashion house and perfume brand Yves Saint Laurent from Sanofi, the two groups said Monday.

But no agreement had yet been concluded concerning the beauty division of Sanofi, which includes Yves

Saint Laurent and other fashion names, they said in response to a report in the newspaper Le Figaro that the deal was under discussion.

The newspaper reported that Sanofi would sell its beauty products division to LVMH for about five billion French francs (\$892 million).

LVMH would also take responsibility for debts owed by Sanofi-Beaute amounting to 1.2 billion francs.

The division also owns the names of perfumes Krizia, Roger et Gallet, Fendi and Oscar de la Renta.

Sanofi is a subsidiary of the French oil group Elf Aquitaine.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You're under pressure to produce today, but don't despair. You can have what you're seeking, even if the goals are higher than you usually set for yourself. You don't have to reach them all by yourself. A partner will be a valuable asset right now. This person will inspire you in a loving way, and that makes all the difference.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) The urge to spend more than you have will be enormous. It'll get worse before it gets better, too. Luckily, you and your partner have a little time to plan ahead, and that's exactly what you should be doing. You're shrewd financially right now, but that may not be the case later. Once you get into those stores, anything could happen. Be prepared.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You have too much to do, and not enough time to do it. You're looking forward to other things, but don't think about them now. Focus on the job at hand, so you can be practical and efficient. Instead of drifting and nervous. You know how you get sometimes. Remember your deep-breathing exercises and you will perform brilliantly.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 22) It's said that love is the most important energy, the force that works miracles and heals and makes everything possible. Love is the essence of creation, and creation is the essence of life. So, life is love and love is life. Well, it's the life you want to lead, anyway, and today you'll have an insight into how to make that happen.

LEO: (July 23 to August 22) There's something important that has to get finished, and it looks like you've got a little guilt trip going. Guilt trips get a bad rap, but if you use the guilt as a motivator, it can be quite effective. The traditional way of doing that is to make somebody else feel guilty enough to help you, but that's unethical. Why don't you just ask.

VIRGO: (August 23 to September 22) You're learning fast right now, and you're also teaching, because you're passing on what you're acquiring to your partner. You two are in this game together, so you need to pool your knowledge immediately. No problem. You're communicating well. The action is fast and furious, but it's bringing you closer together. That's what matters most.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 23) You're trying

## HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1998

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

to find a way to stretch your money further. This could be your inspiration to get into a creative project you've long thought about. You'll do well, especially if there's a deadline you need to meet. All those criteria are available for you today, if you set it up for yourself like that.

SCORPIO: (October 24 to November 21) You're still powerful, and this is good, because there's lots of wheeling and dealing going on. You can work all sorts of shenanigans to get what you want. This is something you're good at most of the time, but this year, there's a bit of a risk. You could lose something if you're not careful. Watch what you're doing.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) One of the drawbacks about being footloose and fancy free is that sometimes other people expect you to do things, and are hurt if you don't. That's not your fault, but on the other hand, you know about a couple of these cases ahead of time. Avoid a hassle by just doing what you know will be expected.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 19) Your friends are providing the inspiration and motivation, but you've got an important job, too. You usually provide the structure, but today you'll be providing the humour. Don't let them get too serious or they'll miss the whole point. The truth often lies just beneath the surface, and humour is a good way to communicate it.

AQUARIUS: (January 20 to February 18) Treat older people with respect today. One of them can give you a powerful gift, so treat them like the most important people in the world. That's not a bad habit to get into. You may think you know more, or can do more, but that's foolish to show. If people think you know less, and they know more, you're in a better position.

PISCES: (February 19 to March 20) This is a good day to stretch your legs and your mind. Get out for some exercise, even if it's just a long walk on your lunch hour. You've been under intellectual and emotional pressure lately, and there's more to come. Don't despair. You'll do fine, but you ought to take your mind off it now, at least for a little while.

Birth Stone of December: Turquoise — Zircon

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## Dynamics Media Services launched in Amman, Jordan



AS THE brand market place becomes even more crowded and the economies of the world slow down the advertising dollar is being made to work harder. Realising the growing need of marketers to spend their dollar wisely, Dynamics Media Services is now offering media planning and buying services in Amman, Jordan. This is the first time that a company will be offering this kind of specialist media services to advertising agencies, clients, media like TV stations, press, outdoor and radio among others.

Dynamics Media Services is an independent organisation being staffed by media experts who have international experience in media systems, media models and media research. Also, Nahed Hattar who is a well-known media person in Amman brings along with him vast knowledge on the local media buying scene. Advertisers in Jordan can now benefit from the world class tools and methods of planning and buying media.

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Only qualified applicants should submit an application form (available at the Embassy gate) to the Personnel Office prior to December 23, 1998.

Note: It is possible the position could become permanent.

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# Asian Games

## Jordan's Abu Khadijeh fails in bid for gold medal

Karate competition starts as athletics events resume today

By Aileen Bannayan  
in Amman and  
Jordan sports media  
reporters in Bangkok

JORDAN'S MOHAMMAD Abu Khadijeh Monday lost on points to Pakistan's Muzaffar Mirza and had to settle for a bronze medal bringing to five the Kingdom's medal tally at the 13th Asian Games, which conclude in Bangkok Dec. 20.

Playing in the semifinal of the heavyweight 91 kilogramme class, Abu Khadijeh had expressed hope to win Jordan's first Asian gold medal.

Although he attacked his Pakistani opponent from the outset, Abu Khadijeh could not keep up his momentum in the fourth and fifth rounds where he received straight jabs to his chin and face as he lost 23-8.

Jordan's top boxer, who had won three gold medals within a year — at the 8th Pan-Arab Games, the West Asian Games in Tehran and the 18th Arab Boxing Championships — told reporters that he lost only because his opponent had more international exposure.

"I'm not an arrogant person. I really hoped to achieve a better result, but I can honestly say there is no one of the same calibre in my class to train with in Jordan. What we really need is real long international exposure through training camps to boost our experience," Abu Khadijeh said.

Abu Khadijeh had stressed the same point after winning the gold at the last Pan-Arab Games after most boxers said they did not get enough training expenses and were unemployed.

"I have no proper athletic shoes for competition. I bought what I'm wearing in Thailand," the Baqaa refugee camp resident said. Abu Khadijeh said if training conditions did not improve he would quit the game.

His coach Maytham Amer added: "The result does not demonstrate Mohammad's capability. Maybe he needs more experience, but there was some bias on the part of the referees as most onlookers agree."

Other officials at the boxing arena complained that Mirza, who advanced after a controversial win in the



Mohammad Abu Khadijeh (L) of Jordan takes a hit to the chin from Muzaffar Mirza (R) of Pakistan during the boxing heavyweight semifinals at the 13th Asian Games in Bangkok. Abu Khadijeh lost the bout 8-23 (AFP photo)

quarterfinals, was not warned by the referee although he committed many technical errors. This was widely seen as a move by the referees trying to appease International Boxing Federation president who is a Pakistani.

Also Monday, weightlifter Awad Aboudi competed in the heavyweight over 105-kilogramme class. Aboudi lifted 145 kilogrammes in the snatch but failed at 150 and 152. In the clean and jerk he lifted 165 and 172.5 kilogrammes but failed at 177.5.

Aboudi nevertheless managed overall eighth place beating Arab competitors from Kuwait, Syria and Lebanon.

Both Aboudi and his coach were content with the result.

On Tuesday, the karate competition begins with Jordan's team headed by Pan-Arab Games bronze medalist Burheina Mahsiri. Also Tuesday, Mohammad Shaman and Mohammad Mutari will compete in the 800 metres as the athletics event resumes.

Mutari competed in the 1,500 metres finishing with a time of 3:59.30 short of his own 3:47.9.

In the 400 metres, teammate Shaman also came short of his own best time of 48.28 finishing sixth and last place with a time of 49.64.

Shaman was probably a replacement for teammate Shadi Ka'kur who was sup-

posed to compete in the 200 and 400 metres but was returned home by Jordanian delegation officials for failing to comply with delegation regulations.

The athletics competition pins high hopes on Fakhreddin Fuad — a high jump gold medalist at the Pan-Arab Games — who achieved 215 centimetres, and just came short of his record of 222 at the team's training camp in Qatar where teammate Mohammad Abdul Baqi set a new Jordanian record in the triple jump with 15.53 — 18 centimetres more than his previous mark.

Jordan is yet to win gold at the Asian Games. In the past two participations in the Seoul '86 and Hiroshima '94, Jordan's sole medals were achieved through taekwondo with three silver and five bronze medals.

The Kingdom has so far won five medals — four in taekwondo. Ibrahim Aqel, Ala' Kunkut, and Hussein Tahleh won silver. Mohammad Farajeh won bronze, and Abu Khadijeh added a bronze in boxing.

Jordan had 19 officials and 37 athletes in 11 sports: athletics, boxing, bowling, gymnastics, judo, karate, shooting, squash, swimming, weightlifting and taekwondo. The Kingdom has nearly completed participation in the three week event.

Only Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan missed the Games as 41 countries took

part in the last sporting event of the century.

Although the Jordan Olympic Committee (JOC) carefully screened each participating federation's athletes and preparations to enlist the best athletes in each sport, apart from taekwondo so far, the rest of the sports produced disappointing results.

In bowling and shooting, Jordan's team was eliminated from competition.

In swimming, Hana Majaj had disappointing results that lagged far off from her local records. Majaj finished last in the 200-metre butterfly with a time of 2:40.85 while her local time was 2:26.00.

Pan-Arab Games bronze medalist Majaj also came in 18th with a time 1:13.16 in the 100-metre butterfly, also far off her local time.

In boxing, Basel Hindawi, bronze medalist at the Pan-Arab Games, and gold medalist Ayman Nadi failed to earn medals for Jordan as they competed alongside 180 athletes from 31 nations in the event.

In squash, the country's top player Mohammad Saeed lost 3-0 in the quarterfinals to one of Pakistan's top players — Zarak Khan. Jordan's Majd Njada was also eliminated by a player from Hong Kong.

In taekwondo, Nancy Hindi, Zaha Talhoumi, Luma Abu Judum, Ali Asmar, Alisar Matar, Mohammad Abul Ruz and Ahlam Bino lost their bouts. The rest of

their teammates secured four medals.

In judo, Mousa Khalaf, a silver medalist at the Pan-Arab Games, was eliminated, alongside Rami Dasouqi and Tawfiq Suleiman.

In gymnastics, Jordan's Ahmad Abdo and Shadi Khouri obtained 45th and 47th places respectively.

In weightlifting, the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) reprimanded the Jordan Olympic Committee after the country's top weightlifter, Ayed Khawaldeh, became the first athlete to test positive at the Bangkok Games after setting a new Arab record finishing seventh among fifteen participants in the 56-kilogramme class.

He was found to have taken the diuretic Triamterene in a random test following which he was immediately disqualified and expelled from the Games village by the OCA which handed the matter to the sport's governing body to impose international suspension which will bar him from the Pan-Arab Games.

Jordanian delegation officials ordered his return home after a second positive test. He is expected to serve a two-year suspension.

Khawaldeh, who was the first Jordanian to win three bronze medals in one event at the 8th Pan-Arab Games in Beirut last summer, said his Chinese coach has instructed him to take the medicine during the West Asian Games in Tehran and during another championship in Algeria last year, and did not know that it contained a banned substance.

The Kingdom did not take part in team sports — notably soccer, handball and basketball due to reason pertaining to their respective federations.

The JOC has underlined the importance of taking part in the Asian Games saying it was "an invaluable chance to assess our teams and pinpoint our location on the map of Asian sports being part of plans of the Ministry of Culture and Youth to prepare teams for the upcoming Pan-Arab Games in Amman next summer and the 2000 Sydney Olympics."



Korea's Lee Yong-Sun winds up to throw the javelin in the women's javelin final at the 13th Asian Games at the Tammassat University Sports Complex, northern Bangkok. Lee threw 62.09m to win the gold (AFP photo)

## Korean strongman wins weightlifting gold

BANGKOK (AFP) — Kim Tae-Hyun of South Korea emerged the strongest man of the Asian Games here on Monday by winning the super-heavyweight weightlifting gold medal here.

Kim set a new Asian record of 195kg in the snatch and lifted 232.5kg in the clean and jerk to win with an overall tally of 427.5kg.

His total was 7.5kg more than second-placed Igor Hallinov of Uzbekistan, who finished with 420kg. The bronze went to Rezaazadeh Hossain of Iran with a combined score of 415kg.

It was South Korea's second gold medal of the Chinese-dominated competition after Kim Hak-Bong's sensational victory in the men's 69kg last Wednesday.

Hak-Bong, who managed only 180kg in his first two jerk attempts, had asked for and lifted a world record 195kg on his final visit to take the gold from bewildered Chinese Wan Jianhui.

There was, however, no Chinese in the super-heavy-

weight category after Asian champion Wei Tiehan preferred to rest at home after last month's world championships in Finland.

The weightlifting event ended with China emerging the undisputed champions, winning all seven women's titles and four of the eight golds on offer for the men.

Fourteen world records were shattered during the eight-day competition, with the rampant Chinese women having a hand in 12 and one each going to North and South Korean men.

Kim's lead of 7.5kg after the snatch told in the end as

he tied with the burly Hallinov at 232.5kg in the jerk.

"The snatch was my strong point, but I was not worried about the jerk," a relieved Kim said later.

"I had been doing around 230 at practice so the final score makes me very happy," said Kim, who tipped 126kg on the scales against the Uzbek's 130kg.

Iranian Rezaazadeh Hossain, the heaviest medalist at 141kg, did well to get to 187.5kg in the snatch, but then undid the good work by falling behind in the jerk with 227.5kg.

## GOVERN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF  
& TAMMAM HIRSHI  
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### ANSWERS TO WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q1 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:

AKQJ98 OAK QKQ5 AK108

What is your opening bid?

A - Despite the fact that you have a good five-card suit, only four lower and 21 high-card points, the hand does not measure up to a demand bid. Still, it is too strong for one spade. Our suggestion is to open two no trump. A five-card major does not preclude that action.

Q2 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:

AA5 QKQ72 06 AAQ10854

The bidding has proceeded:

SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST

1♠ Pass 1♠ Pass

What do you bid now?

A - You have a very good hand, but your singleton diamond is a little worrisome. Bid one heart. If partner can't bid again, you will have missed nothing. And if partner does act, you can take appropriate action at your next turn by jumping in clubs to show your strength.

Q3 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:

AAK QKQ542 084 AAKE

The bidding has proceeded:

SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST

1♠ Pass 1♠ Pass

What do you bid now?

A - What an ugly problem! Your hand is far too strong for a simple two hearts, yet your suit is so shoddy you should not even consider a jump rebid of three hearts. And raising partner's suit is out of the question. We suggest a temporary bid of two clubs. As above, should

partner pass it is highly doubtful you have missed a game, although you could be in the wrong part score.

Q4 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:

AA QAK83 OK1083 AAKE8

Partner opens the bidding with one spade. What do you respond?

A - You have an enormous hand, but it is not suited to a jump shift. If you choose to jump, partner would raise with any three-card bidding (indeed, some partners might raise with a doubleton high honor) and there is no way to then get to the right spot. To avoid that embarrassment, be content with two clubs for the moment to see how the auction develops.

Q5 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:

AK85 0845 0785 AK543

Partner opens the bidding with two no trump. What do you respond?

A - You are going to game, but with your ruffing value in spades there is no harm in checking for a possible 4-4 major fit along the way. Bid three clubs. If partner shows hearts, bid game in the suit; otherwise, sign off in three no trump.

Q6 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:

AK10876 QKQ2 Q98 AQ10

Partner opens the bidding with one no trump. What do you respond?

A - Jump to three spades and you run the risk of landing in a 5-3 fit instead of a superior 4-4 fit should partner hold four hearts. Start off by bidding two clubs. Stayman. If partner shows a major by responding two diamonds, you can then bid three spades. After a major-suit rebid by North, jump to game in that suit.

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## Asian Games Medals Table

	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
China	82	60	47	189
South Korea	44	35	25	104
Japan	35	35	25	95
Taiwan	15	10	5	30
Kazakhstan	14	18	5	37
Thailand	13	16	5	34
North Korea	5	10	5	20
Iran	4	7	17	28
Malaysia	3	1	15	19
Kuwait	2	1	8	11
Singapore	2	1	7	10
Pakistan	2	1	6	9
Indonesia	2	1	11	14
Hong Kong	2	1	10	13
Mongolia	2	1	8	11
Sri Lanka	2	1	7	10
Uzbekistan	2	1	14	17
India	2	1	7	10
Vietnam	2	1	7	10
Qatar	2	1	7	10
Turkmenistan	2	1	7	10
Myanmar	0	5	4	9
Philippines	0	3	7	10
Jordan	0	3	5	8
Kirgizstan	0	2	5	7
Nepal	0	2	5	7
Syria	0	2	5	7
UAE	0	2	5	7

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PHILADELPHIA '2'

Richard Gere .. in

RED CORNER

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15,  
8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL: 5699238

PLAZA

Comedian  
Mohammad Huneidi .. in

SAEEDI AT THE  
AMERICAN  
UNIVERSITY

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8:30, 10:30

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Mohammad Huneidi .. in

ISMAILIA  
RAYEH GAI

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL: 5934793

GALLERIA 1

ABDOUN  
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Michael Keaton .. in

DESPERATE  
MEASURES

Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL: 5934793

GALLERIA 2

ABDOUN  
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Damayanti Darsha of Sri Lanka crosses the finish line en route to win the women's 400 metres dash at the 13th Asian Games at the Thammasat University Sports Complex, northern Bangkok. Damayanti clocked 51.57 seconds and won the gold (AFP photo)

## Jayasinghe pulls out as Sri Lanka wins 2 gold medals

BANGKOK (AFP) — Drugs-tainted Sri Lankan sprinter Susantika Jayasinghe stole the show for all the wrong reasons here on Monday when she quit the Asian Games after pulling out of the 100 metre final at the last minute.

Her withdrawal overshadowed a drama-packed day which saw Li Xuefeng of China and Japan's Koji Ito win the 100m golds while Qatar's Mohammad Suleiman claimed his third 1,500m title in a row.

Jayasinghe's exit dashed Sri Lankan joy after their athletes had ended a 24-year wait for an Asian gold by winning two in the space of 20 minutes.

The 22-year-old, the world 200m silver medalist and currently under investigation for drug use, pulled out after finishing a hamstring injury in the 100m semi-finals.

She said: "I wanted to run but my hamstring was a problem. I just want to go back to Sri Lanka."

Team officials agreed, meaning she will also miss the 200m final where she was firm favourite to take gold.

Jayasinghe's husband Shanmika Nandakumara said she was looking forward to returning home because of the injury suffered during a qualifying race on Sunday.

The late withdrawal of one of the major stars of the Games even caught out the stadium announcer, who read out her name for the final, prompting a round of applause at the Thammasat stadium before gasps of dismay greeted her empty lane.

Her bitter rival Li, who became embroiled in a war of words with Jayasinghe last week over who would win here, took full advantage by winning the gold in 11.05sec, ahead of Lin Yali of China (11.36) and Rachita Mistry of India (11.41).

Mohamed Taib of Qatar celebrates his win of the mens' 1,500m race at the 13th Asian Games. Taib finished the race in 3:40.03 to take home the gold medal (AFP photo)

It later emerged that Li had run while suffering from a high temperature and fever. Ironically, Jayasinghe's pull-out may have saved the International Amateur Athletic Federation a few blushes. Should the sport's world governing body find her guilty of drug taking next year and ban her, she would have been stripped of any medals won here.

Moments later, Ito won his gold but just missed out on becoming Asia's first man under 10 seconds as he clocked 10.05sec.

The Japanese 28-year-old had timed 10 seconds flat in the semi-finals. The silver went to Seeharwong Reanchai of Thailand and the bronze to Yasukatsu Otsuki of Japan.

Sri Lanka, meanwhile, had the consolation of their two historic gold medals on Monday.

Damayanthi Darsha and Sugath Tillekeratne won their 400m events within minutes of each other.

The last gold won by a Sri Lankan came in 1974, in the men's 4x400m relay.

Darsha, after carrying out a lap of honour with the Sri Lankan flag, revealed: "My coach Sunil Gunawardena was in that 1974 relay squad so I'm so please I won the gold here. When he won I hadn't yet been born."

Darsha, won in 51.57 seconds to beat Chen Yuxiang of China (52.50) and Svetlana Bodirskaya of Kazakhstan (53.00).

Indian veteran P.T. Usha, meanwhile, one of Asia's greats in the 1980s and hoping for a glorious swansong, finished sixth in a disappointing 54.37.

Tillekeratne's win in 44.99sec, just outside the Games record, was highly impressive.

He found Qatar's defending champion Ibrahim Ismail catching him on the final bend but the diminutive

Sri Lankan, skating over the ground, found another gear to win by three metres as Ismail tied up.

The 25-year-old Tillekeratne, who weighs just 57kg (8st 13 lbs) compared to Ismail's 70kg (11st), first emerged when he became one of the few men to beat Olympic champion Michael Johnson. This year he ended the season as ninth fastest in the world.

Showman Suleiman clinched his third successive Asian Games title with a dominating display in the men's 1,500m.

He controlled the race throughout to win in three minutes, 40.03 seconds ahead of Kim Soon-Hyung of South Korea (3:40.56) and India's Bahadur Prasad (3:41.48).

Suleiman began gesturing to the crowd in the last 50 metres, suggesting it was all too easy, before punching the air several times after crossing the line.

Suleiman, unbeaten in Asian Games and Asian Championship races since 1990, is expected to try for the 5,000m gold here.

Japan's Koji Ito waves his national flag as he celebrates his win of the mens' 100m. Ito ran a 10.05 to take the gold medal (AFP photo)

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## Sri Lankan runner a story of success

BANGKOK, Thailand (AP) — A Sri Lankan sprinter who trained by running along the top of a dam wall in the mountains won gold Monday at the Asian Games, in a story of success from humble beginnings.

Sugath Tillekeratne won the 400 metres in 44.99 seconds. His medal and a victory in the women's 400 metres by Damayanthi Darsha gave Sri Lanka its first Asian Games golds in 24 years.

Tillekeratne, a quiet 25-year-old from a poor family of five children in central Sri Lanka, started training seven years ago by running back and forth along the 90-metre long dam — the only flat piece of land in the mountains around his family home. He ran in canvas shoes and said it was boring to always cover the same piece of land.

But the hard work paid off. He was picked for national training and now lives in Colombo, the capital.

"I started from humble beginnings, but I'm comfortable now," he said after his win Monday.

Asked how he compares as a runner to Michael Johnson, the Olympic champion, Tillekeratne said: "We'll see at the 2000 Olympics."

Tillekeratne also won a bronze in the Commonwealth Games. He was welcomed as a hero by the sports minister after that victory but treated like a criminal by soldiers after he was slow to show his identity papers at a checkpoint.

He said the soldiers were rude and threatening. Hours earlier, he had been greeted with a garland of flowers at the airport by Sports Minister Sumanaweera.

Dissanayake. When he told the troops who he was, the soldiers said they didn't care and tried to beat him up.

## Bangkok streets deserted as Thailand stuns Korea

BANGKOK (AFP) — Thailand's giant-killing Asian Games win over South Korea drained Bangkok's normally bustling streets Monday as people stayed home to watch the game on television.

Nine-man Thailand pulled off a heroic extra time 2-1 victory over World Cup 2002 hosts South Korea on Monday to go through to a semifinal clash with Kuwait in the Asian Games soccer tournament.

Favourites Iran, who brought their World Cup squad to Bangkok, thrashed defending champions Uzbekistan 4-0 thanks to a hat-trick in the last 10 minutes from Bayern Munich striker Ali Daei and they will meet China in the other semi-final.

China, 2-1 losers to Iran in a second round group match, beat Turkmenistan comfortably 3-0 while Kuwait could not turn their domination over Qatar into goals and had to settle for a 3-1 win on penalties with the score 0-0 after extra time.

The semi-final line up was as expected — apart from the astonishing Thais.

The host nation ousted the Koreans in the quarter-finals with a spectacular golden goal in extra time to the delight of 60,000 fans in the Hua Mark stadium and millions watching at home.



Kuwait's football player Faraj Laheeb (C) and Al-Sager Hani (L) fight for the ball with Qatar's Al Shammar Saghayer (R) during play in the quarter final round in the 13th Asian games in Bangkok (AFP photo)

Only the area around the stadium was busy while shops, restaurants and streets were quiet for the early afternoon game won by Thailand in extra time.

Normally abundant streams of taxis were nowhere to be seen soon after.

Thai fan Cherdchai Thomkaew, 25, a restaurant waiter said the team, reduced to nine men before

the end of the game had surpassed all expectations.

"Unbelievable. I thought we were 100 per cent hopeless," he said.

"I am very happy and so glad. As far as the semi-finals are concerned, I don't care who Thailand will get. But for sure, I won't miss the game for anything on Wednesday."

Sa-Nga Kaewkhun, 42, a company driver said: "I just watched the second half. It's

a miracle because the Thai team had only nine players.

"Semi-finals? It's going to be very tough for us and I hope they can make it to the final, against who, it doesn't matter."

Thailand, who have former Aston Villa striker Peter Withe on their coaching staff, scored the golden goal six minutes into extra time with a rasping 30 yard free-kick from Danurong-Ongrak.



Real Sociedad players turn their back to the photographers during a team photo before their Spanish Primera Division match against Real Madrid in Madrid, to show the back of their shirts, all with the name of Aitor Zabaleta, a fan who was killed last week before the UEFA Cup match against Atletico de Madrid. A minute of silence was observed Sunday before all of Spain's Primera Division games. Real Madrid won 3-2 (AFP photo)

### Spanish league results

Valladolid	3	Alaves	0
Athletic Bilbao	2	Dep. La Coruna	1
Zaragoza	0	Mallorca	1
R. Santander	0	Tenerife	0
Extremadura	0	Real Oviedo	1
Real Madrid	3	Real Sociedad	2
Celta Vigo	2	Espanyol	0
Valencia	1	Salamanca	0
Barcelona	1	Villarreal	3
Real Betis	0	Atletico Madrid	0

### ANNOUNCEMENT No. 15/98

The Telecommunications Regulatory Commission of Jordan Announces the Issuance of a Public Notice to Address the Specific Form of Price Cap Regulation to be Applied to Licensed Public Payphone Operators

The Telecommunications Regulatory Commission ("TRC") has issued a public notice seeking comments from interested parties on the specific form of price cap regulation to be applied to the licensed public payphone operators. Pursuant to the terms and conditions of the payphone operators' licences, the prices charged by these operators for access to and use of public payphone services are to be subject to price cap regulation after the operators' first year of operation. Price cap regulation is currently the preferred form of tariff regulation around the world.

The comments filed by interested parties will assist the TRC in determining the specific form of price regulation to be applied to the payphone operators in the coming years.

Copies of the Public Notice may be obtained by contacting the TRC at the address and telephone number noted below. Interested parties must submit their written comments to the TRC by December 28, 1998. The TRC will organise a public meeting of all interested parties following the receipt of written comments. This meeting is tentatively scheduled for January 6, 1999. Details of the time and location of the meeting will be provided to all interested parties in due course.

Telecommunications Regulatory Commission

Re: TRC Public Notice -15

P.O. Box 850967

Amman-11185, Jordan

Telephone: (962) 6-5863645

### TRC Notice - 16

TELECOMMUNICATIONS REGULATORY COMMISSION  
NOTICE OF INTENTION TO LICENCE  
GMPCS SERVICES IN JORDAN

On 19/10/98 the Council of Ministers adopted a policy regarding the licensing of Global Mobile Personal Communications Services (GMPCS) in Jordan. This policy defines a liberalised and open approach to the licensing of these new services allowing the introduction of all GMPCS services to the Jordanian market by local service providers. As required by the new Government policy, on 19/10/98 the TRC signed the GMPCS Memorandum of Understanding (GMPCS MOU). This GMPCS MOU contemplates a coordinated international approach to the regulation of GMPCS services under the auspices of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and in cooperation with other national regulatory authorities and GMPCS system operators and services providers.

In accordance with the new Government policy, the GMPCS MOU and the Telecommunications Law, the TRC now proposes to establish the licence conditions for the introduction of GMPCS services in Jordan.

Before finalising these conditions of licence the TRC wishes to receive comments and suggestions from interested parties in Jordan on any issues relating to the licensing and operations of GMPCS services in Jordan.

All interested parties are therefore hereby invited to submit written comments to the TRC in respect of these matters before 28/12/1998 at the following address:

Telecommunications Regulatory Commission

Re: TRC Public Notice - 16

P.O. Box 850967

Amman 11185, Jordan

Telephone: (962) 6-5862645

Fax: (962) 6-5863643

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# Hillary avoids row on state

GAZA (R) — Palestinians gave U.S. first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton a heroine's welcome on Monday for having voiced support for a Palestinian state last May.

Mrs Clinton studiously avoided rekindling a row over the issue — one of the most intractable problems in U.S. Middle East diplomacy — while on a landmark visit to Palestinian-ruled lands with her husband, President Bill Clinton.

Star-struck Palestinians flooded the dust-clogged streets of a Gaza refugee camp in a raucous tribute to Mrs Clinton, whose visit bolstered their dreams of a future independent state.

"Welcome Mrs Clinton, Angel of Mercy," read one banner.

Almost outstaging her husband, the first lady earned a standing ovation by some 1,000 leading Palestinians at an historic conference on nullifying

clauses in the PLO charter calling for Israel's destruction.

"Thank you again for witnessing with us the construction of our country and I hope you will be here to witness again our Palestinian state," Palestinian first lady Suha Arafat told Mrs Clinton after touring a centre for encouraging small-scale enterprises run by women.

Mrs Clinton graciously accepted her host's welcome but steered clear of repeating comments last May in support of a Palestinian state that made White House policymakers wince.

The first lady stuck to favourite issues such as education, religious tolerance and the importance of guaranteeing women's rights to help eradicate poverty in developing countries.

"Women's rights are human rights and women's rights are as important here in Gaza as

they are anywhere in the world," said Mrs Clinton, wearing a hand-embroidered Palestinian dress given to her by Gazans.

"With God's help and with your determination, courage and hope, I believe you will build a better future for yourselves and your children. God bless you all," she told an audience of development workers and aid recipients.

During an earlier tour of a school for handicapped children, Mrs Clinton ignored a reporter's request to clarify her views on Palestinian statehood.

She also declined to respond directly to the thanks of a Palestinian woman lawyer, Hanan Matar, for her "support of the Palestinian people and their own state."

Mrs Clinton told a conference of Arab and Israeli youths in a video address in May that she believed "the territory the Palestinians currently inhabit

and whatever additional territory they will obtain through peace negotiations, should be considered and will evolve into a functioning modern state."

The White House scrambled to stress that she was speaking her own mind and not that of her husband.

Palestinians want to establish an independent state in the West Bank and Gaza, with Arab east Jerusalem as its capital, a move Israel vehemently opposes.

The United States, the key Middle East peace broker, is careful to avoid taking a position on acrimonious issues Israel and the Palestinians will have to negotiate in a final peace arrangement.

Palestinians nonetheless poured out their love for Mrs Clinton. Scouts, marching bands and schoolchildren lined the streets and cinder-block rooftops of Gaza's Beach Camp for hours waiting for the first lady's arrival.



Palestinian schoolgirls celebrate the arrival of U.S. President Bill Clinton to the Palestinian-controlled areas on Monday (Reuters photo)

## Israelis agree Clinton's Gaza trip boosts Arafat

TEL AVIV (R) — U.S. President Bill Clinton's visit to the Gaza Strip on Monday gave Israeli political hawks and doves a rare opportunity to agree.

Both sides said that, regardless of how his peace mission affected Israel, it was good for Palestinian President Yasser Arafat.

Opponents of Israeli-Palestinian accords said Clinton's visit, the first by a U.S. President on Palestinian soil, boosted the Palestinian quest for statehood which Israel vehemently opposes.

"There's no doubt that this visit strengthens the Palestinian demand of statehood and so it's terrible for us," said Jewish settler leader Pinchas Wallerstein.

"The fact that he landed there with a helicopter is significant recognition of this," he said, referring to Clinton's arrival at the newly opened Gaza International Airport.

U.S. officials denied the trip was an endorsement of Palestinian aspirations for statehood and asked authorities in Gaza to refrain from playing national anthems at an airport reception ceremony.

A top Israeli official said Clinton was keeping his promise to try to advance implementation of the Wye River accord during the seven-hour Gaza visit, but accused Palestinians of twisting its significance to serve their own interests.

"There's always been a danger that the trip... would be truncated and perverted into an implicit recognition of Palestinian sovereignty," said David Bar-Ilan, a senior aide to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The success of Clinton's visit, which included talks with Arafat, depended in part on the process in which the Palestine National Council and other Palestinian groups reaffirm the annulment of clauses in the PLO charter calling for Israel's destruction.

Clinton was expected to urge the 1,500 participants in a keynote address to reaffirm once and for all the nullification of articles in the 1964 charter. Israel is demanding a clear vote.

Uri Savir, former director-general of Israel's foreign ministry who helped negotiate Israel's first accord with the Palestinians in 1993, said Clinton's visit would advance both peace and Palestinians' hopes for independence.

## Four Palestinians wounded in clashes with Israeli army

BETHLEHEM (AFP) — Israeli soldiers shot and slightly wounded four Palestinians Monday near Bethlehem in a new day of violent protests just a day before U.S. President Bill Clinton is due to visit the town, witnesses said.

The soldiers fired rubber-coated metal bullets at Palestinian youths who threw rocks at an army checkpoint on the road from Palestinian-ruled Bethlehem to Jerusalem.

According to Palestinian witnesses, the disturbances began after soldiers humiliated a group of labourers trying to cross Israel by forcing them to lie on the ground.

An identical incident sparked stone-throwing Sunday which led to the

wounding of five Palestinians, one seriously, by Israeli gunfire.

Israel has suspended application of the U.S.-brokered Wye River peace accord with the Palestinians as a result of a three-week-old wave of violent street protests in the occupied territories.

Clashes between protesters and Israeli troops have left four Palestinians dead and hundreds wounded.

Most of the violence was sparked by Israel's refusal to release hundreds of Palestinian political prisoners as part of the Wye deal.

Clinton was due in Bethlehem on Tuesday to visit the Church of the Nativity, where Christian tradition says Jesus was born.

## Clinton in tearful encounter with prisoners' children

GAZA CITY (AFP) — In an encounter which moved Bill Clinton and Yasser Arafat to tears, four young daughters of Palestinians held prisoner by Israel appealed to the U.S. president Monday to bring their fathers home, officials said.

The four girls aged six to 12 handed Clinton a letter as he met with Palestinian National Authority (PNA) head Arafat during an historic first visit by a U.S. president to the Palestinian territories.

"We are the children of prisoners and ask you, Mr. President, to do your best to release our fathers from Israeli jails," read the letter, according to Sufian Abu Zaid, a PNA official responsible for prisoner affairs who was at the encounter.

The three younger girls began weeping as Clinton read the letter in Arafat's office and one of them then appealed directly to the president, saying, "I want my father home to spend the feast with me" — a reference to the holiday marking the end of the Holy Month of Ramadan next month.

Her plea brought tears to the eyes of both Clinton and Arafat, Zaid said.

"Clinton told them he would do his best to release their fathers," he told AFP.

## Iranian leaders vow to end attacks on writers

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and President Mohammad Khatami vowed Monday to do everything possible to halt a wave of deadly attacks against writers and dissidents.

Khamenei, in his first comments on the spate of kidnappings and murders of opposition figures in the Islamic Republic, ordered the security forces to arrest those behind the killings.

"The murder of citizens, whoever they might be, is a crime against the country's national security," state television quoted Khamenei as telling a group of clerics.

"The ministers of intelligence and interior as well as the judiciary must seriously pursue the case. There is no doubt that the role of the enemy will be exposed in the recent events," he said.

## 'Palestinian students deported because of violations'

(Continued from page 1)

Al Majid weekly quoted a Palestinian source who claimed that Prime Minister Jarawneh's short trip to Gaza this week was for "security" reasons in order to "protect President Clinton's life."

Jarawneh, who was accompanied by senior officials including the director of the General Intelligence Directorate Samih Batkhi, met during his short visit with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and senior Palestinian officials.

Judeh refuted the weekly's report about the purpose of Jarawneh's visit to Gaza and said the PNA made no request for security assistance and the subject was not raised during the talks with Palestinian officials.

according to Sufian Abu Zaid, a PNA official responsible for prisoner affairs who was at the encounter.

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Her plea brought tears to the eyes of both Clinton and Arafat, Zaid said.

"Clinton told them he would do his best to release their fathers," he told AFP.

## Wrong time greets victor

BANGKOK (R) — China's Olympic champion, Guo Jingting, was greeted by a wrong time when she held off China's Olympic champion, Guo Jingting, to win the women's 1,500 metres. But Guo Jingting and Indian sports officials waited more than a week to hear their national anthem.

Guo Jingting, 21, won the 1,500 metres in 4:10.19, beating India's Olympic champion, Guo Jingting, who finished in 4:11.19. Guo Jingting's victory was celebrated by the Chinese flag and the national anthem. After the race, Guo Jingting was greeted by a wrong time when she held off China's Olympic champion, Guo Jingting, to win the women's 1,500 metres. But Guo Jingting and Indian sports officials waited more than a week to hear their national anthem.

## Escaped Indian convict knocked at prison door

CALCUTTA (R) — An escaped convict who had been in a jail in eastern India for 20 years, was knocked at the prison door by a group of prisoners.

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